



Appalachian Regional Commission

OHIO – PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT PLAN

FY 2024-
2027

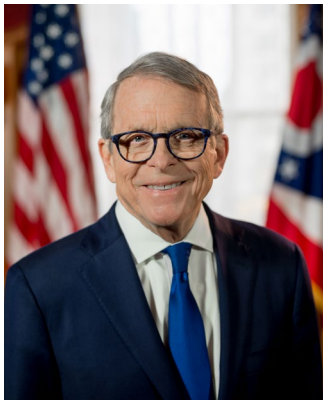


Department of
Development

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A Message from Governor Mike DeWine



January 2024

From the shores of Lake Erie in Ashtabula County and the banks of the Ohio River to Clermont County, Ohio's Appalachian region is an integral part of the heritage, innovative spirit, and rich culture of our great state. Made up of 32 counties, this region is full of natural marvels, remarkable heritage, and significant opportunities for the future.

The rolling hills of Ohio's Appalachian region are home to communities that highlight some of the best attributes of our great state. Appalachia has plenty of untapped growth, development, and investment opportunities, and we are dedicated to supporting local communities through investments in infrastructure and workforce development. Advancing these priorities will further cement Ohio as a great place to live, work, and play.

This plan outlines Ohio's new initiatives for the Appalachian region as well as details on how our priorities work in unison with goals set by the Appalachian Regional Commission. We remain committed to eliminating substance use disorders in the region while also providing essential mental health support. Small businesses and entrepreneurs alike will receive our utmost attention as we focus on creating new opportunities for the Ohioans who call this region home. And, for Ohioans who are looking to upgrade their job skills, we are investing in new workforce training opportunities to help citizens advance in their careers.

For those who don't live in the region, we'll continue to highlight the natural wonders and tourist destinations within Appalachian Ohio so that its beauty and wonder can be experienced by all.

Of the thirteen states within our nation's Appalachian region, Ohio remains the only state with dedicated state funding. Through the Governor's Office of Appalachia, we are dedicated to working with local partners in ways that make the biggest impact.

As reflected in the goals and objectives outlined in this plan, this administration has made Appalachian Ohio a top priority.

Very respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike DeWine".

Mike DeWine
Governor of Ohio

Introduction

The State of Ohio submits this Development Plan in compliance with Chapter 5 of the Appalachian Regional Development Commission Code.

Ohio’s Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Fiscal Years 2024-2027 Development Plan describes the Governor’s goals, objectives, and priorities for Ohio’s 32 Appalachian counties and serves as a guidance document for the Governor’s Office of Appalachia (GOA) and Ohio’s four Local Development Districts (LDDs). The goals, objectives, and priorities presented are designed to address Appalachian Ohio’s unique needs and improve the region’s community, education, and economic prosperity. The Appalachian Regional Commission created an overview of data and projections to better understand the region’s geography, economy, health, and other demographics.



The historic Majestic Theatre in Chillicothe

Overview and Assessment of Ohio’s Appalachian Region

Stretching along Ohio’s eastern and southern borders, Ohio’s Appalachian region consists of 32 counties and covers more than 39 percent of the state. Counties include: Adams, Ashtabula, Athens, Belmont, Brown, Carroll, Clermont, Columbiana, Coshocton, Gallia, Guernsey, Harrison, Highland, Hocking, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Lawrence, Mahoning, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Pike, Ross, Scioto, Trumbull, Tuscarawas, Vinton, and Washington.

The region is diverse, ranging from medium- and large-sized cities to small villages and unincorporated communities, to farmland, and rural and industrial areas. The population is scarce, unevenly distributed, and trending down. From 2010 to 2020, the Appalachian portion of the state lost roughly 3 percent of its population.¹

Despite being historically regarded as economically depressed and geographically isolated, the Appalachian region is home to self-reliant and independent communities with a strong attachment to their land and families.

A map of the region can be found in Appendix C.

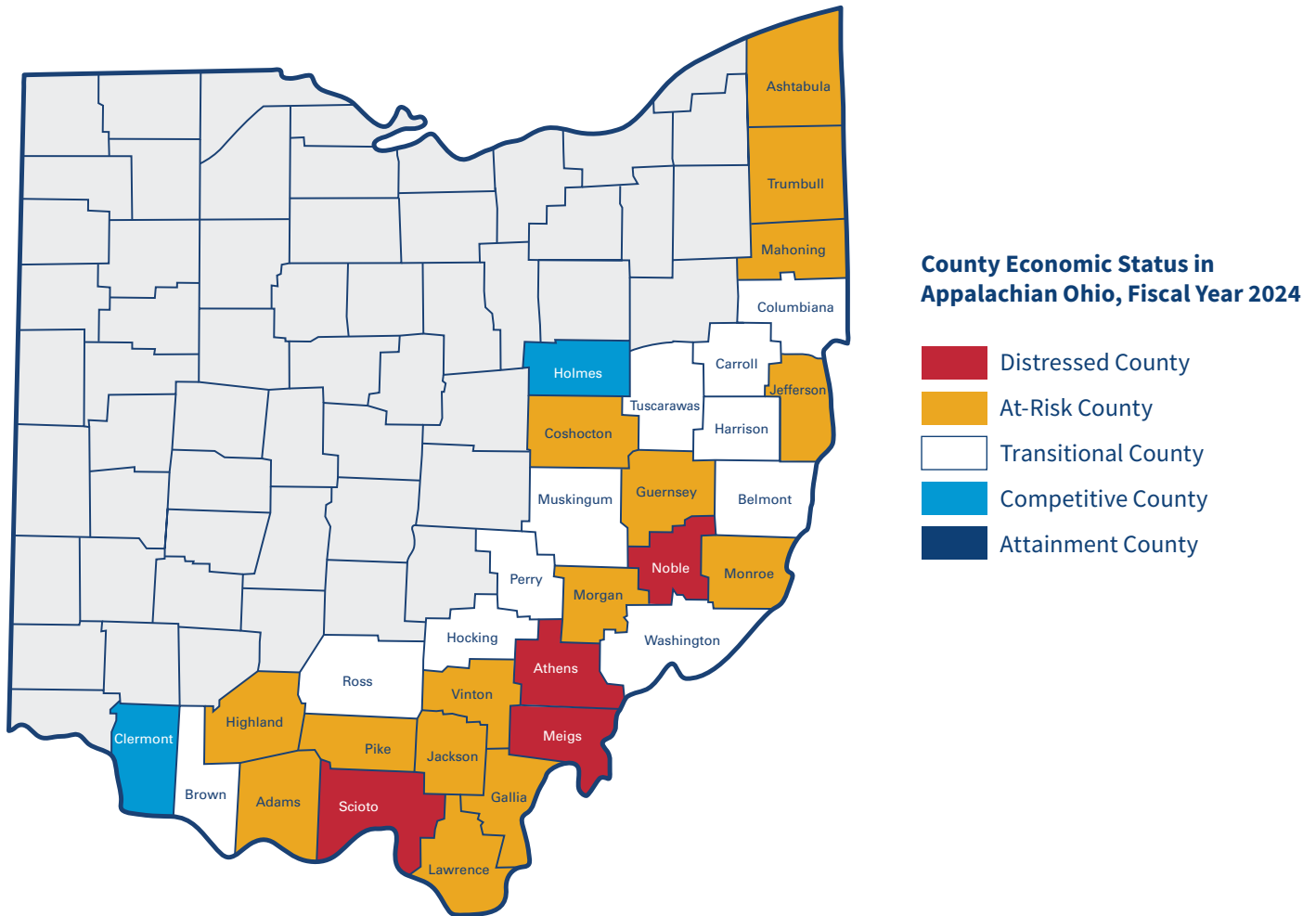
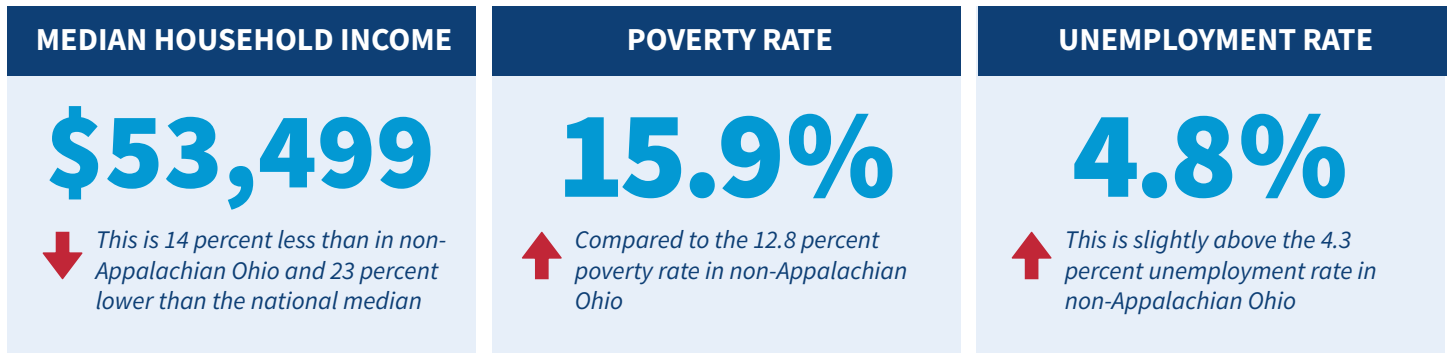
Population, Land Area, and Density

	Population 2017	Population 2022	Change Since 2017		Land Area in Square Miles	Population per Square Mile of Land Area 2022
			Number	Percent		
Ohio	11,658,609	11,756,058	+ 97,449	+ 0.8%	40,952	287.1
Appalachian Ohio	1,999,505	1,968,186	- 31,319	- 1.6%	16,011	122.9
Non-Appalachian Ohio	9,659,104	9,787,872	+ 128,786	+ 1.3%	24,941	392.4

¹ ARC & Population Reference Bureau Report, Sept. 2022

Economic Status

The Appalachian region has historically experienced economic disparity compared to the rest of the state and the nation. Higher rates of unemployment, lower household incomes, and high poverty rates have been some of the key challenges for decades. In Ohio's Appalachian region:



Education

Education is crucial, not only to economic and community development, but in ensuring that every individual in every community has the opportunity to reach their full potential. Appalachian Ohio is rich with institutions that have educated generations of people and continue to prepare the next generations of Appalachian residents and Ohioans. This includes traditional public and private universities, community colleges, technical colleges, and career centers. Whether it's a four-year university or a six-week credential program, Ohio is focused on growing and improving opportunities so that education is accessible to all and programs are preparing Ohioans for the jobs of the future. Many of these institutions have received ARC and GOA funding to develop and expand programs that meet the needs of a robust economy.

See Appendix D for a map of public universities in the region.

Ohio has four ARC-designated 'distressed' counties in the region: Athens, Meigs, Noble, and Scioto. The development of adult workforce centers in these counties became a priority goal for GOA in 2019 as three of the four did not have a workforce center in their county. GOA committed state funds to Adams County to renovate a former grocery store in West Union. In Meigs County, a Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization Initiative (POWER) grant was awarded to Rio Grande Community College to expand its campus center to provide more career technical education and training programs. A POWER grant was also awarded in Monroe County to the Switzerland of Ohio Local School District to establish a maritime program for traditional and adult students. The program is the only one of its kind along the Ohio River between the cities of Pittsburgh, PA and Huntington, WV.



Left: ARC Co-Chair Gayle Manchin, GOA Director John Carey, GOA Chief of Staff Julia Hinten, and local partners at the Noble Local Schools' Green Acres Farm in Noble County

Above: Gayle Manchin, ARC co-chair, at the Swiss Hills Innovation and Career Center in Monroe County

Health Care Access

Access to quality health care remains a challenge for many people who live in the Appalachian region. In 2021, an Appalachian Regional Commission report found that for 33 out of 41 health indicators – from lifestyle, behavioral health, child health, to community characteristics – the Appalachian region, performed worse than the national average. One survey also showed that respondents from Appalachian Ohio were significantly less satisfied with health care services compared to those in the rest of the state.



Appalachian Ohio's **heart disease mortality rate** is 22 percent higher than the national rate and 15 percent higher than the rate in non-Appalachian Ohio.



Appalachian Ohio's **Years of Potential Life Lost rate** is 28 percent higher than the national rate and 16 percent higher than the rate in non-Appalachian Ohio.



The average adult in Appalachian Ohio reports feeling **mentally unhealthy** 17 percent more often than the average American and 5 percent more often than the average adult in non-Appalachian Ohio.



The supply of **primary care physicians** per 100,000 people in Appalachian Ohio is 25 percent lower than the national average, and 30 percent lower than the average in non-Appalachian Ohio.

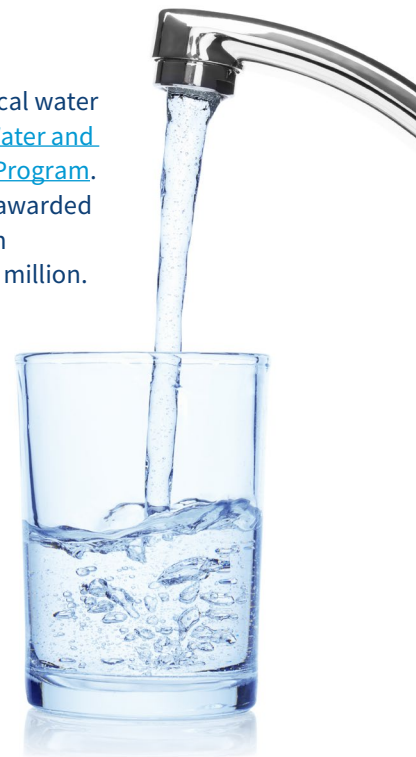
Infrastructure

Solid infrastructure is crucial to thriving communities and healthy residents. A lack of access to clean drinking water continues to affect a large number of households in the Appalachian region, but historically there has been a lack of accurate, consolidated data to support this sentiment and influence public policy. Over the past four years, Ohio has sought an effective strategy and information to address this problem. The Governor's Office of Appalachia partnered with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service at Ohio University to [map and identify areas that do not have access to a water system](#).

Data collected through this initiative shows that 34 percent of the Appalachian Ohio population is unserved by a public water system, significantly higher than the 12 percent national average. Partly because of this work, awareness of access to clean water has been elevated. In response to the need presented in Appalachian Ohio and throughout the state, Governor DeWine and the Ohio General Assembly designated nearly \$500 million in state and federal funding

since 2019 for investments in critical water and sewer projects through the [Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Grant Program](#). Of those, 119 projects have been awarded in the region, in all 32 Appalachian counties, totaling more than \$177 million. An additional \$124 million has been appropriated in the biennial budget passed on June 30, 2023.

34%
of the Appalachian Ohio population is unserved by a public water system



Internet Access

Similarly, many individuals in Appalachian Ohio still do not have reliable access to the internet. The Governor's Office of Appalachia is working with BroadbandOhio to help address this issue. Buckeye Rural Electric Cooperative, Washington Electric Cooperative, Tuscarawas, Carroll, Morgan, Vinton and Ashtabula counties have all received ARC POWER grants with technical assistance from the Governor's Office of Appalachia. In addition, Adams, Athens, Meigs, Monroe, and Noble counties have ARC funded broadband projects through congressionally designated funds for North Central Appalachia. Historically, the funding for these projects is \$5 million per year. BroadbandOhio is currently working with Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Kentucky on a multi-state grant through ARC's Appalachian Regional Initiative for Stronger Economies (ARISE) program. If awarded, this will bring even more Broadband resources to the region.

Responding to Emergencies

From natural disasters to public health emergencies, unforeseen events are an unfortunate reality that communities must manage. The DeWine-Husted administration is committed to supporting recovery efforts and projects that help bolster emergency preparedness.

On Feb. 3, 2023, a Norfolk Southern freight train carrying toxic chemicals derailed in the village of East Palestine. The tanker cars ruptured and exploded. The DeWine-Husted administration is assisting the community with safety concerns and economic recovery. A total of \$450,000 ARC and state funds will purchase safety equipment that will better prepare the community for future emergencies. With this support, East Palestine will purchase a drone for the fire department, two eight-ton dump trucks, and a one-ton utility bed truck. The village's existing trucks are more than 20 years old and have been used to haul materials and supplies to the site of the February train derailment. The funding package includes \$100,000 in Appalachian Regional Commission Emergency Response Funds, \$200,000 in ARC Co-Chair Funds (designated to Ohio during Governor DeWine's term as ARC States' Co-Chair in 2020), and \$150,000 in State Funds from the Governor's Office of Appalachia.



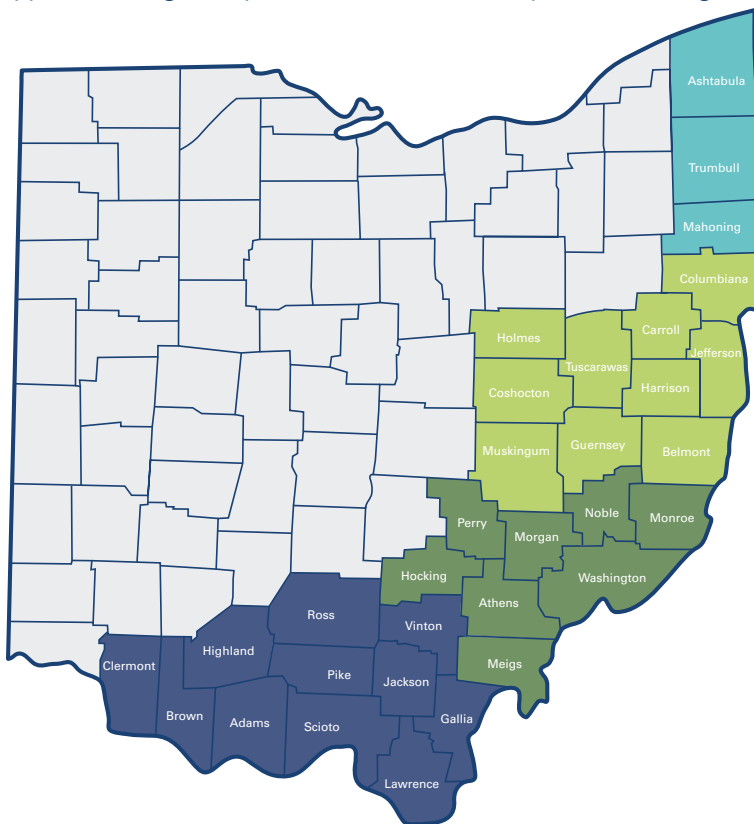
Governor DeWine visited East Palestine following the Feb. 3, 2023 train derailment.



Ohio Appalachian Partnerships and ARC Programs

The FY 2024–2027 Development Plan includes input from the office of Governor Mike DeWine, Ohio Department of Development, Governor’s Office of Appalachia, four Local Development Districts, and stakeholders from Appalachian Ohio.

The Governor’s Office of Appalachia (GOA) is responsible for preparing and approving area development projects through coordinated efforts with the Local Development Districts (LDDs) and their members, nonprofit organizations, local communities, and JobsOhio and their regional partner organizations. GOA ensures the 32-county Appalachian region has access to all available state programs and administers ARC funds. Ohio is the only state in the 13-state federal Appalachian region to provide state dollars on top of ARC funding.



Local Development Districts

Local Development Districts (LDDs) are regional planning organizations that have a primary role in project development, coordination, and planning. Ohio’s four LDDs include Buckeye Hills Regional Council (Buckeye Hills), Ohio Mid-Eastern Governments Association (OMEGA), Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission (OVRDC), and Eastgate Regional Council of Governments (Eastgate).

The four LDDs operate at the local and county level and submit their project proposals to the state GOA. The districts concentrate on local community concerns by working with board members, consultants, and local citizens on transformational projects. Community stakeholders work with Local Development Districts to prioritize their projects by a scoring process before submitting them to GOA. The criteria include provisions to add support, funding, and resources for distressed counties designated by the ARC.

- Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission (OVRDC)
- Buckeye Hills Regional Council (Buckeye Hills)
- Ohio Mid-Eastern Governments Association (OMEGA)
- Eastgate Regional Council of Governments (Eastgate)

Appalachian Community Grant Program

During his second term, Governor DeWine proposed a long-overdue, comprehensive investment in the Appalachian region of Ohio to enhance quality of life, help rebuild economies, and revitalize the communities of Ohio's 32 Appalachian counties. In June 2022, Governor DeWine [signed House Bill 377](#), which created the Appalachian Community Grant Program. This program allocates \$500 million from Ohio's designation of the American Rescue Plan Act to support transformational projects in the region. The Governor's Office of Appalachia is responsible for the administration of the program and is leveraging relationships with federal, state, and local partners to maximize the long-term impact of these funds. Activities funded by the program need to include components from one of three priorities:



INFRASTRUCTURE

such as main street or downtown redevelopment, improvements to multi-community connecting trails, significant outdoor community space, links to community arts, history and culture, access to telemedicine.



WORKFORCE

such as public-private partnerships designed to build and coordinate technical, educational, clinical and workforce infrastructure.



HEALTHCARE

such as investments in school or community-based services to address children's physical and behavioral health needs or plans to address substance use disorder.

[In an initial round announced March 2023, four shovel-ready projects received a combined \\$50 million.](#) The State also allocated \$30 million in planning and technical assistance funds to help communities prepare their projects and applications for the second round of funding. The program has garnered a great deal of interest and awards for the remaining funding will be announced early 2024.

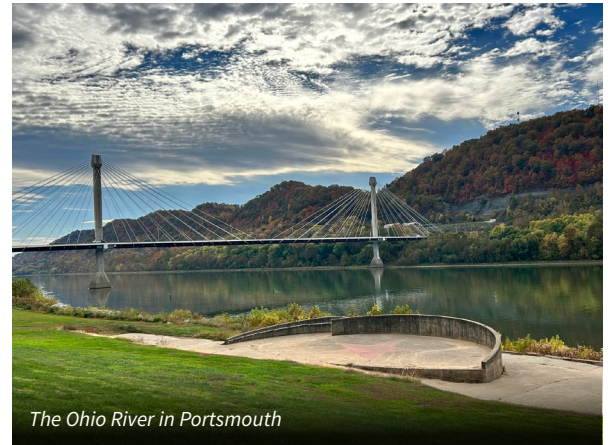


Department of Development Director Lydia Mihalik and Governor's Office of Appalachia Director John Carey break ground on a new co-working space in Logan, OH. The space is part of the At Work in Appalachia Project, which was awarded up to \$17 million in funding in the first round of the Appalachian Community Grant Program.

ARC POWER Initiative

Since 2015, the Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) grant program has allocated federal funds to help boost communities and regions affected by the decline in jobs related to coal mining, coal power plant operations, and coal-related supply chain industries. As of October 2023, POWER has invested more than \$421 million in 507 projects throughout all of Appalachia and Ohio has received 72 awards totaling \$62 million.

Ohio utilizes technical assistance funds from ARC to contract with two uniquely qualified individuals who provide grant writing and technical support to prospective applicants. This has helped increase both the quality and quantity of applications submitted from Ohio and helped the communities most in need compete for these funds.



GOA Director John Carey with John Hemmings, Executive Director of OVRDC and regional partners touring the Portsmouth Riverfront Development site. The project was awarded a \$1.5 million POWER project in October 2023.

ARC INSPIRE Initiative

Established in 2021, the Investments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) initiative addresses the substance use disorder crisis within Appalachia. The program creates and expands an ecosystem of recovery for individuals which will lead to entry and re-entry into the workforce. Some project investment examples include supporting the post-treatment to employment track, investments in local health care facilities and professionals, and recovery-focused job training programs. The initiative has invested \$42 million in 127 projects since its creation, with \$6.1 million being awarded to 16 awards in Ohio.



Left: GOA Director John Carey and ARC co-chair Gayle Machin at the 2023 ARC Annual Conference in Ashland Kentucky

Right: ARC co-chair Gayle Manchin introduces Ohio INSPIRE awardees

ARC ARISE Initiative

The Appalachian Regional Commission launched the Appalachian Regional Initiative for Stronger Economies (ARISE) grant program in 2022. The program's goal is driving large-scale regional economic transformation through multi-state collaborative projects throughout Appalachia. It utilized funding provided by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021. As of November 2023, seven ARISE projects impacting Ohio communities have been awarded. At least six others passed the initial review and were invited to apply for funding.

Ohio's Investment Priorities

The DeWine-Husted administration is committed to preparing communities for the future by investing in a wide range of initiatives from arts and culture to infrastructure.

These investments aim to help Appalachian Ohio reach economic parity with the rest of the state and the nation and establish a higher quality of life for residents. Investment priorities include:



Broadband

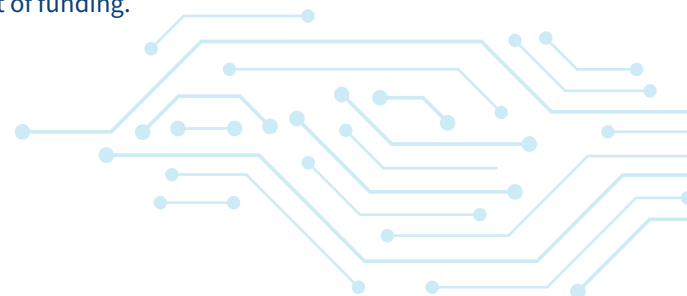
Technology continues to transform the world in which we live and work. Governor DeWine's Ohio Broadband Strategy outlines a plan to provide high-speed internet access to all Ohioans.

In June 2023, Governor DeWine, Lt. Governor Husted, and Ohio Department of Development Director Lydia Mihalik announced \$793 million from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program to support the state's internet expansion efforts.

BroadbandOhio, a division of the Department of Development, will administer the state's allocation of BEAD funding under the guidance of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). The program, established in 2021 as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, provides \$42.5 billion to help states expand internet access by funding planning, infrastructure deployment and adoption programs. BroadbandOhio works closely with the Governor's Office of Appalachia to expand access in the region and to complement their respective programs.

In August 2023, the U.S. Department of Treasury announced the approval of \$77.5 million in funds for broadband infrastructure. BroadbandOhio will run a second round of the Ohio Residential Broadband Expansion Grant Program. ORBEG is a competitive grant program designed to fund last-mile broadband infrastructure projects in areas throughout Ohio that lack access to reliable, high-speed internet. The applications for the second round of ORBEG were due Jan. 5, 2024.

BroadbandOhio was awarded \$5 million through the BEAD program in 2022 to conduct stakeholder outreach as a first step towards receiving this funding. The input has helped BroadbandOhio create a five-year action plan, which will serve as a guide for how the state plans to use the full allotment of funding.



Tourism

Across its rolling hills, Appalachian Ohio has some of the best tourism assets and outdoor recreation that Ohio has to offer. Tourism is an important economic driver in the region, but it is also important in developing community capacity and wellbeing. In 2023, Governor DeWine announced Ohio's new branding and slogan, "Ohio, The Heart of It All." The goal is to promote Ohio as a great place to visit, live, learn, work, and raise a family. This sentiment is important for the Appalachian region, as population shifts show more residents leaving than moving to the region. Tourism efforts showcase the vibrant small towns, breathtaking scenery, and exceptional quality of life that Appalachian Ohio offers to residents and businesses alike.

In 2023, Ohio was ranked as the [best state in the Midwest for summer road trips](#), and fourth nationally. Ohio generated \$53 billion of sales in 2022, an increase of nearly 13 percent of visitor spending from 2021.

The Governor's Office of Appalachia coordinates with the Local Development Districts and Ohio Appalachian Country to promote a positive regional image of Appalachian Ohio. GOA convened stakeholders at Lake Hope State Park and Salt Fork State Park to discuss how local stakeholders could work together to promote the whole region. As a result of this work, TourismOhio, the state's marketing agency, included the Governor's Office of Appalachia in the cooperative marketing program. The co-op has elevated the region as a destination and helped change the narrative about Appalachia.

In September of 2023, Ohio celebrated its first United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage site designation. The Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks are a collection of eight Native American built sites that includes three Ohio counties. This marked the United States' 25th World Heritage site, putting the Hopewell Earthworks on the same list as the Statue of Liberty, Grand Canyon, The Great Smoky Mountains, and Mesa Verde National Parks. The new designations will promote these sites and all that the region has to offer to more Ohioans, Americans, and worldwide visitors.

The Governor's Office of Appalachia and TourismOhio are working together to promote and shine a positive light on Appalachia by:

- Continuing to market the region's success stories and highlighting the people living in Appalachia. This will encourage potential visitors to come and see the region's generous hospitality and appeal, and improve the quality of life for the nearly two million people who call it home.
- Working with the LDDs to identify places of interest to highlight and develop projects that increase the region's capacity to entertain and host visitors.
- Funding the economic impact report generated by Ohio's Appalachian Country. This organization uses data to drive policy discussion and investments in Appalachian tourism. The report helps counties identify trends and better focus marketing efforts.



Hopewell Culture National Historical Park in Ross County

Economic Development

Ohio's economy is thriving and the state is becoming a global center for industry, innovation and entrepreneurs. Major investments from companies including Intel, LG, Honda, Joby Aviation, and others are making national headlines. Suppliers for these new projects come from every region in Ohio and include businesses from more than 38 counties, including several in Ohio's Appalachian region. These investments provide a unique opportunity for Ohio to continue to diversify its economy and continue to expand advanced manufacturing.



Above: Governor DeWine speaking at an Intel Ohio announcement event

Right: Governor DeWine announces a major investment by Honda. In 2022, the company selected Ohio to lead its electric vehicle production and, with LG Energy Solution, a joint venture battery plant.

Appalachian Ohio is home to industry clusters in food production and oil and gas. These industries and their suppliers employ a large portion of the region's workers. However, entrepreneurship and small businesses also play a vital role in the economy. Ohio has and will continue to fund projects that foster entrepreneurship, and the administration will continue to support workers and businesses in all sectors.

ARC Goals in Coordination with Ohio Strategies

Ohio's Appalachian Development Plan and Annual Strategy Statements align with the ARC's five strategic goals:



Building Appalachian Businesses

Strengthen and diversify the region's economy through inclusive economic development strategies and investments in entrepreneurship and business development.



Building Appalachia's Workforce Ecosystem

Expand and strengthen community systems (education, healthcare, housing, childcare, and others) that help Appalachians obtain a job, stay on the job, and advance along a financially sustaining career pathway.



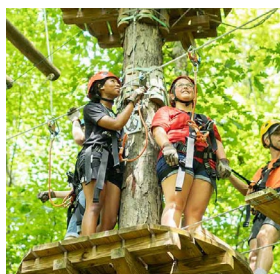
Building Appalachia's Infrastructure

Ensure that the residents and businesses of Appalachia have access to reliable, affordable, resilient, and energy efficient utilities and infrastructure in order to successfully live and work in the region.



Building Regional Culture and Tourism

Strengthen Appalachia's community and economic development potential by preserving and investing in the region's local, cultural heritage, and natural assets.



Building Community Leaders and Capacity

Invest in the capacity of local leaders, organizations, and communities to address local challenges by providing technical assistance and support to access resources, engage partners, identify strategies and tactics, and conduct effective planning and project execution.



In partnership with the LDDs, the Governor’s Office of Appalachia has determined strategies to advance regional investment and growth. The Ohio strategies which align with the ARC Goals include the following:

ARC Goal #1

Building Appalachian Businesses

Strengthen and diversify the region’s economy through inclusive economic development strategies and investments in entrepreneurship and business development.

Ohio Strategies

Support projects that improve, diversify, or otherwise increase the competitiveness of Appalachian Ohio’s economy.

1. Support projects that drive or advance the economy in Appalachian Ohio.
2. Expand opportunities for the development of advanced manufacturing and technology
3. Foster entrepreneurship through technical assistance, financing, and support networks to enhance small business development and expansion.
4. Support planning activities in communities that focus on future economic development and regional transformation.

ARC Goal #2

Building Appalachia’s Workforce Ecosystem

Expand and strengthen community systems (education, healthcare, housing, childcare, and others) that help Appalachians obtain a job, stay on the job, and advance along a financially sustaining career pathway.

Ohio Strategies

Improve access and expand opportunities in health and education to strengthen and grow the region’s workforce.

1. Expand health care access for Ohioans through wellness and prevention programs.
2. Increase the availability of mental health counseling services in rural areas and schools.
3. Invest in the recovery ecosystem to respond to the substance use disorder crisis in and support recovery-to-work programs.
4. Support initiatives focused on improving the region’s labor force participation rate. Invest in job training initiatives and enhance partnerships with educational institutions that prepare and bolster Ohio’s workforce for the future.
5. Increase the number of students acquiring a college degree, professional certificate, or other credentials.

ARC Goal #3

Building Appalachia's Infrastructure

Ensure that the residents and businesses of Appalachia have access to reliable, affordable, resilient, and energy efficient utilities and infrastructure in order to successfully live and work in the Region.

Ohio Strategies

Reinforce and develop the region's infrastructure to maintain existing systems and incentivize economic growth.

1. Support and assist communities in rural Appalachian Ohio as they work to establish, maintain, and extend critical water and sewer infrastructure systems to serve Ohio businesses and residents.
2. Expand access to broadband for underserved Ohioans in partnership with BroadbandOhio.
3. Work with electric co-operatives and prioritize projects that allow for future potential broadband expansion.
4. Support efforts to improve grid resiliency and explore energy solutions that best serve the region.
5. Support transportation systems, including local access road projects that enable business expansion or improve ease of access for residents.
6. Capitalize on the economic potential of the Appalachian Development Highway System.
7. Support and strengthen existing partnerships between LDDs and resource partners, including state agencies and public research institutions, to provide critical research and information concerning utility deployments and capacities in rural Appalachian Ohio.

ARC Goal #4

Building Regional Culture and Tourism

Strengthen Appalachia's community and economic development potential by preserving and investing in the region's local, cultural heritage, and natural assets.

Ohio Strategies

Improve the quality of life in Appalachia and capitalize on opportunities provided by natural assets and cultural heritage.

1. Invest in the region's natural assets and cultural heritage including rivers, lakes, parks, forests, historic sites and buildings, and downtown districts.
2. Promote a positive image of Appalachian Ohio through marketing efforts with TourismOhio and other partners.
3. Support regional efforts and organizations focused on outdoor recreation and tourism, including research and analysis of those activities.
4. Expand and promote scenic trails and routes throughout Appalachia in cooperation with Ohio Department of Transportation, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and other organizations working on similar efforts.

ARC Goal #5

Building Community Leaders and Capacity

Invest in the capacity of local leaders, organizations, and communities to address local challenges by providing technical assistance and support to access resources, engage partners, identify strategies and tactics, and conduct effective planning and project execution.

Ohio Strategies

Support and encourage capacity building through investments in leadership, technical assistance, planning, and resources.

1. Support educational and recreational opportunities for underserved youth, such as STEM camps or other workshops
2. Encourage cooperation and collaboration among counties and local organizations to help the region advance together by bolstering relationships with these organizations and complementing their ongoing projects.
3. Support leadership development programs at the local, regional, and national levels that connect young leaders with each other and empower them to succeed in their communities.
4. Increase civic engagement through the Local Development Districts and other partnerships.
5. Sponsor planning efforts that help communities develop and implement ideas to improve the region.



Students participating in the ARC STEM Academy at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Transportation and Appalachian Development Highway System

Ohio's Appalachian Development Highway System

The Appalachian Regional Commission has been focusing on the highway development system since Congress' initial authorization of its construction. Part of a 3,090-mile network of highways through the Appalachian Region, the Appalachian Development Highway System has been a focus on investment from the Ohio Department of Transportation, along with ARC, GOA and other local partners, with the goal of expanding the system in Appalachian Ohio and creating access for challenged areas of the region. In 2021, nearly 90 percent of the highway system was under construction or open to traffic. And by 2040, it's expected the entire system will be either partially finished or completed and opened to traffic.

In 2022, under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Ohio received an [\\$18.5 million grant from the Federal Highway Administration](#) to provide funding for highway development in Ohio's Appalachia region.

The [Appalachian Byway](#) was initially designated in 1999 as only 39 miles in Morgan County. Since then, it has been expanded to include Hocking, Monroe, and Noble counties and is over 120 miles long.

State Route 32, the James A. Rhodes Appalachian Highway, spans 180 miles across southern Ohio and gives direct access to communities not otherwise accessible by a major highway system.



Resources

- [Appalachian Regional Commission Website](#)
- [2021 Appalachia Ohio data](#)
- [2021 Health Disparities in Appalachia: Social Determinants](#)
- [ARC Chartbook data](#)

Gov. Dewine Tourism Economic Benefits

- [Governor DeWine, Lt. Governor Husted Unveil Reimagined “Ohio, The Heart of it All” Campaign](#)
- [TourismOhio Marketing Return on Investment](#)

Appendix A

Ohio Appalachia Counties Economic Status (2024) as designated by ARC

Distressed (4)	At-Risk (15)	Transitional (11)	Competitive (2)
Athens Meigs Noble Scioto	Adams Ashtabula Coshocton Gallia Guernsey Harrison Highland Jackson Jefferson Lawrence Mahoning Morgan Monroe Pike Trumbull Vinton	Belmont Brown Carroll Columbiana Harrison Hocking Muskingum Perry Ross Tuscarawas Washington	Clermont Holmes

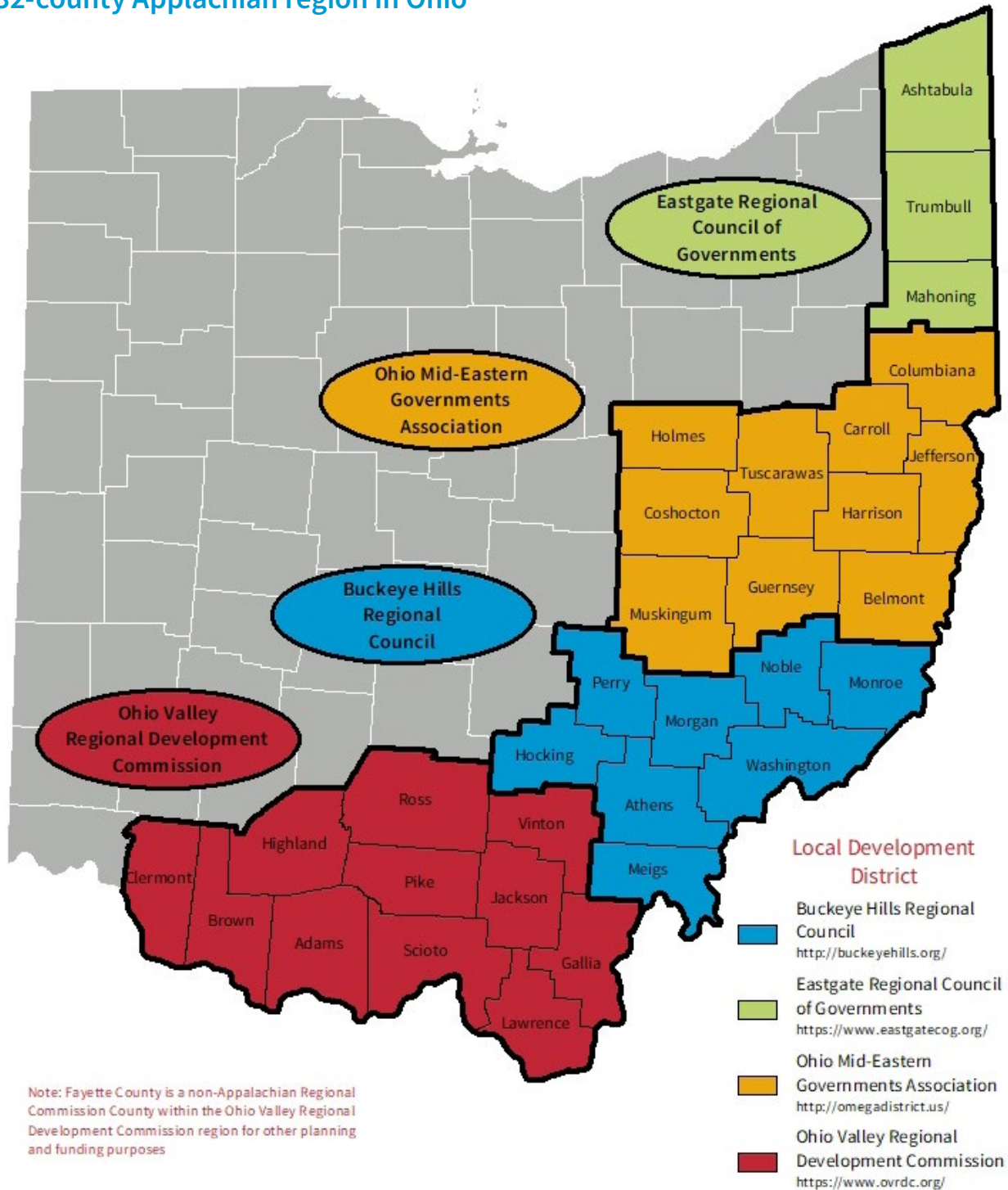
Appendix B

Appalachia Ohio Counties, Number of Distressed Areas

Mahoning - 30	Guernsey - 3	Hocking - 1	Carroll - 0
Trumbull - 15	Ross - 3	Vinton - 1	Noble - 0
Ashtabula - 9	Tuscarawas - 3	Brown - 3	Athens - 0
Lawrence - 5	Perry - 2	Pike - 2	Scioto - 0
Muskingum - 5	Harrison - 0	Washington - 3	Adams - 4
Jefferson - 6	Coshocton - 2	Highland - 1	Meigs - 0
Columbiana - 4	Morgan - 1	Monroe - 0	Clermont - 0
Belmont - 3	Jackson - 2	Gallia - 1	Holmes - 0

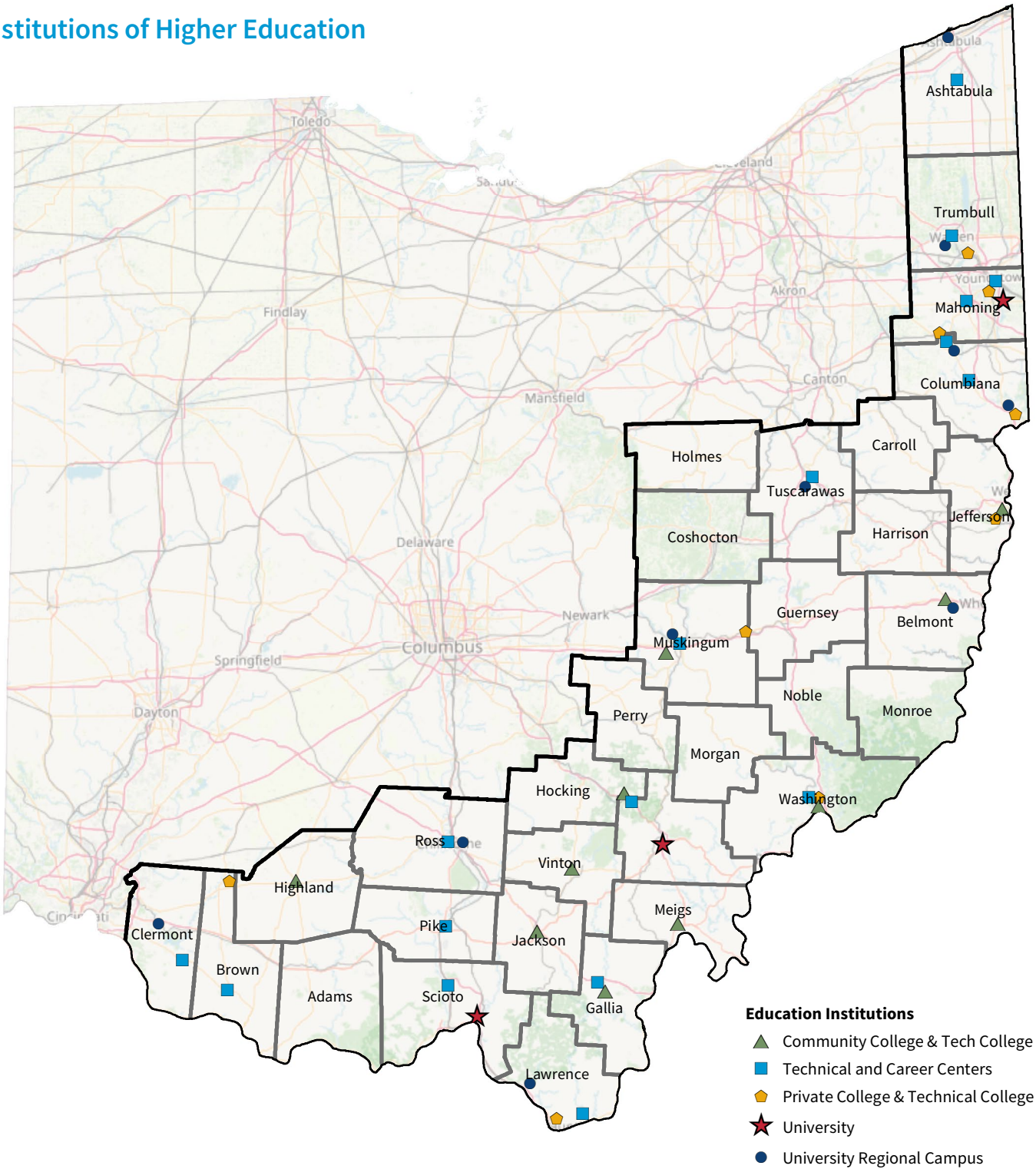
Appendix C

The 32-county Appalachian region in Ohio



Appendix D

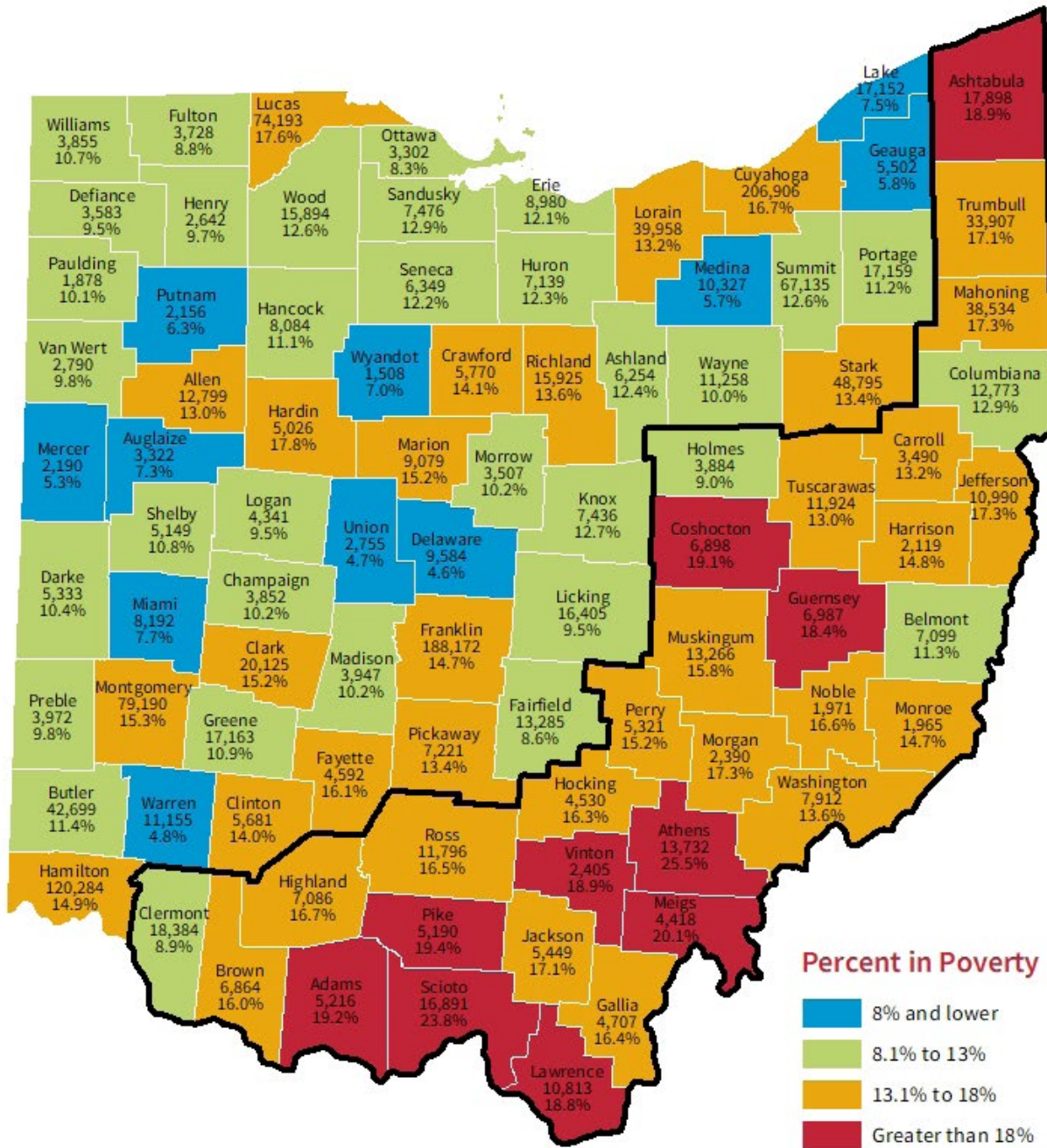
Institutions of Higher Education



Appendix E

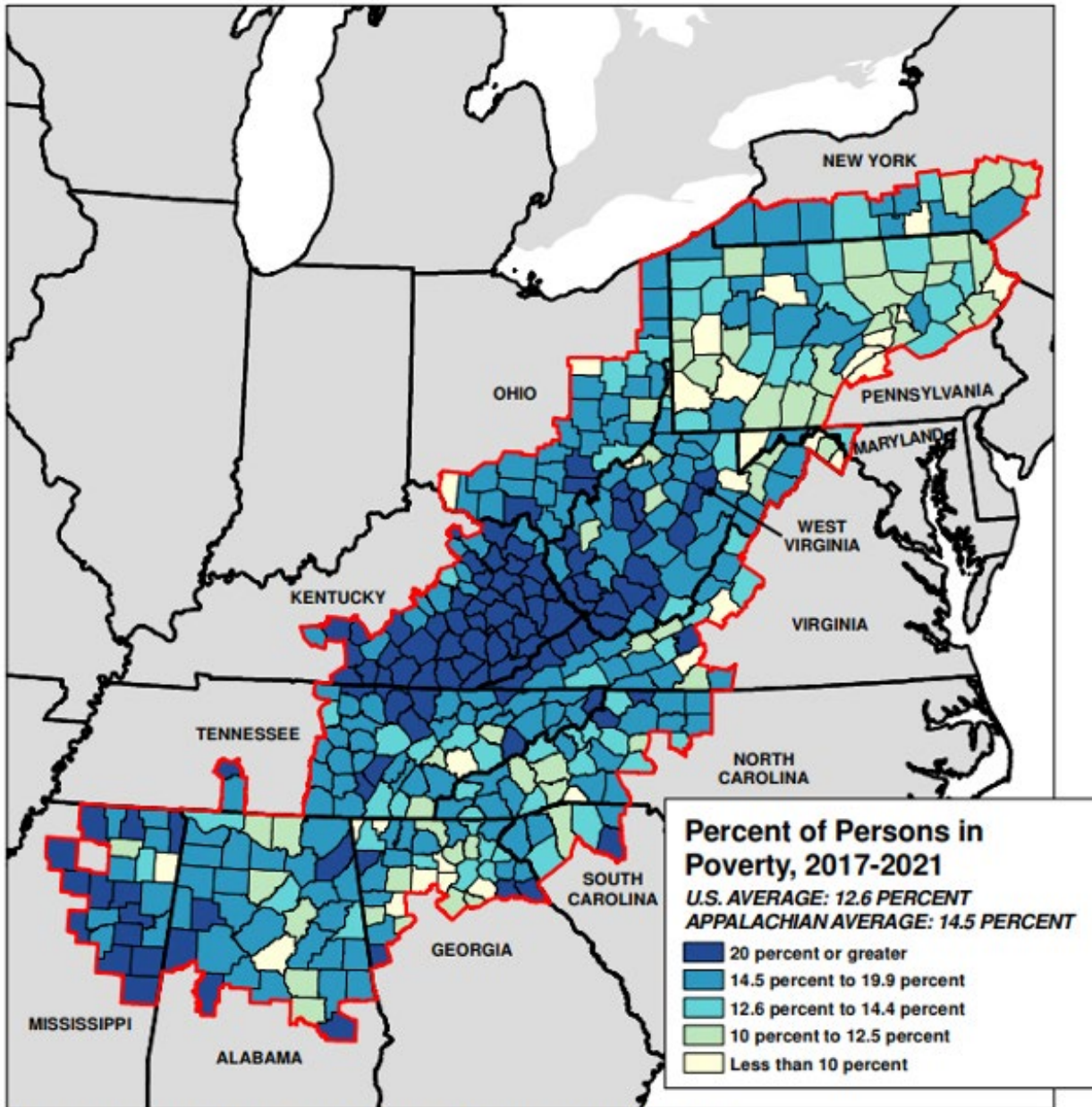
Per Capita Income by County

2017-2021 American Community Survey



Appendix H

Percent of Persons in the Appalachian Region in Poverty, 2017-2021



Map Title: Percent of Persons in the Appalachian Region in Poverty, 2017-2021
Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey.



**Department of
Development**

77 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215 U.S.A.

614 | 466 3379
800 | 848 1300
development.ohio.gov

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