

Dear Local Business,

Finding a skilled workforce is the No. 1 Issue facing local companies. Unemployment is at historic lows and businesses are struggling to find workers. Yet there are more than 1,200 students that graduate high school in Fairfield County every year that don't get a college degree. We can fill this workforce gap with many of these graduates if we introduce them to local careers and help develop their soft skills. This is why the Fairfield 33 Development Alliance and Fairfield County Educational Services Center created the Fairfield County Career Readiness Endorsement.

Dozens of businesses and educational leaders from Fairfield County have provided input over the past few years to develop this endorsement which connects students with local businesses. Now in its second year, the program is ready to help more businesses hire local students who are career ready. Last year 49 students complete the Career Readiness Endorsement, 118 students attend a Career Readiness Expo, 53 vendors participate in the Expo, and a Career Signing Day highlighted career paths for students. The Career Readiness program was featured at the state's Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' annual conference and will be included at the state's Educational Services Center's Connect and Collaborate Conference.

Last year the program was "building the ship as we sailed." This year will be more structured as every school district in the county signed up to participate. Plus, funding from the schools and the 33 Alliance has allowed us to hire Karie Stone as our new Career Navigator. Karie will help coordinate the program and meet with students to help them achieve the Endorsement. The program also received a \$30,000 grant from Ohio's Mayor's Council to provide marketing and curriculum support. This year, the Endorsement can also be used as a pathway to graduation.

We're excited about the year ahead but we need your participation for this program to be even more successful. We will create schedules for each school in advance and ask that you support the students with some of the following areas which will help prepare students for success and hopefully find you a future employee:

- Presentation to classes providing an overview of your industry's career opportunities
- Organized tour of your business
- Mock interviews
- Attending the Career Expo in April 2020
- Participation in our Career Signing Day event in May 2020
- Participation on an advisory board for the program

We're excited about the year ahead. Please complete the following commitment form and indicate the areas in which you are willing to assist.

Thank you for your support in making Fairfield County a great place to work.

Sincerely,



Rick Szabrak
Fairfield County Economic and Workforce Development Director

CAREER READINESS ENDORSEMENT PROGRAM EMPLOYER PARTICIPATION FORM

Company Name: _____

Business Sector: _____

Number of Employees: _____

Career Readiness Program Contact Information:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Yes, I want to participate in the Career Readiness Endorsement Program!

Our business is interested in assisting in the following areas:

- Presentation to classes providing an overview of your industry's career opportunities
- Organized tour of your business
- Mock interviews
- Attending the Career Expo in April 2020
- Participation in our Career Signing Day event in May 2020
- Participation on an advisory board for the program

Thank you for your interest and participation. Please email the completed form to
Sylvia Wolford at the Economic & Workforce Department – Fairfield Co. at:

sylvia.wolford@fairfieldcountyohio.gov