



Press Release: For Immediate Release

JobsOhio Program Assists 22 Underrepresented Communities and Businesses in Southeast Ohio

Southeast Ohio: December 27, 2023 — So far in 2023, 22 companies in Southeast Ohio have utilized the JobsOhio Inclusion Grant to fuel business growth, creating 124 jobs and leveraging over \$10 million in fixed capital investment across the region.

The Jobs Ohio Inclusion Grant was developed to assist eligible businesses in designated distressed communities and/or owned by underrepresented populations across the state. The program recognizes that distressed communities may benefit from investments and job creation on a smaller scale than communities that experience higher levels of corporate investment on a regular basis. Additionally, this program recognizes that businesses owned by underrepresented populations may face additional challenges in growing their businesses.

JonesZylon Company, LLC, a designer and wholesale/distributor of food serving trays, dinnerware and carts for the corrections, healthcare, and long-term care industries, received a \$50,000 JobsOhio Inclusion Grant earlier this year. Based in Coshocton, Ohio, the company is a certified Women Owned Small Business Enterprise as well as an approved Veterans Business Enterprise by the state of Ohio. The company utilized the grant to invest in machinery and equipment to add a new product line.

“Working with OhioSE and JobsOhio has been such a smooth process that I wish I’d started it sooner,” said Tracey Zachrich, co-owner and chief executive officer of JonesZylon. “We had this project in mind for a few years but with the economic uncertainty of the marketplace, we were hesitant to make the investment. This grant definitely spurred us to action and we are eager to bring our new products to the market.”

JobsOhio also provided a JobsOhio Inclusion Grant to Sewah Studios Inc. in Marietta, Ohio. America’s leading manufacturer of cast aluminum roadside historic markers, the company produces 1,200 markers each year. The company recently received a \$25,000 JobsOhio Inclusion Grant to assist with their facility expansion and create five new jobs.

“The expansion includes a 3,000-square-foot building addition, which would allow for an additional production line in the foundry area and added storage and shipping space. This would allow the team to increase its production to meet any level of demand now and in the future,” said Bradford Smith, President of Sewah Studios.

In Gallia County, River City Leather Inc. invested in additional equipment to exponentially increase their output, supported by a \$50,000 JobsOhio Inclusion Grant. The family-owned business manufactures leather goods products and has made products for Grammy Award-winning artists and major brands.

“With this grant, we are intending to replace outdated equipment and be able to further compete with overseas manufacturing. Automation, and the skilled labor to run it, are crucial to growing our abilities

within the pet industry and other future opportunities with UV printing on coated webbing and leather. We are grateful to be able to invest locally,” said Aaron Buckley, President at River City Leather.

The JobsOhio Inclusion Grant was launched in 2020 to help existing Ohio businesses invest in and grow their operations. Through the program, dozens of locally-owned small businesses in Appalachian Ohio have received funds to invest in equipment, infrastructure, training, and other essential costs.

“The JobsOhio Inclusion Grant Program has been a powerful tool for businesses in our region,” said Katy Farber, OhioSE Vice President. “This program is designed to help small and mid-size companies and for much of Southeast Ohio, these are the companies contributing to our thriving local economies. We are grateful for this investment in our region.”

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Ohio Southeast Economic Development (OhioSE) is the JobsOhio Network Partner for southern, eastern, and southeastern Ohio, providing economic development work and resources in 25 rural counties; they are the newest and geographically the largest of the six regions across the state. OhioSE partners closely with regional development districts, local economic development offices, state agencies, and other entities to expand, retain, and attract businesses in the counties they serve. Learn more at OhioSE.com.

JobsOhio is a private nonprofit economic development corporation designed to drive job creation and new capital investment in Ohio through business attraction, retention and expansion. The organization also works to seed talent production in its targeted industries and to attract talent to Ohio through [Find Your Ohio](#). JobsOhio works with six regional partners across Ohio: [Dayton Development Coalition](#), [Ohio Southeast Economic Development](#), [One Columbus](#), [REDI Cincinnati](#), [Regional Growth Partnership](#) and [Team NEO](#). Learn more at www.jobsohio.com. Follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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