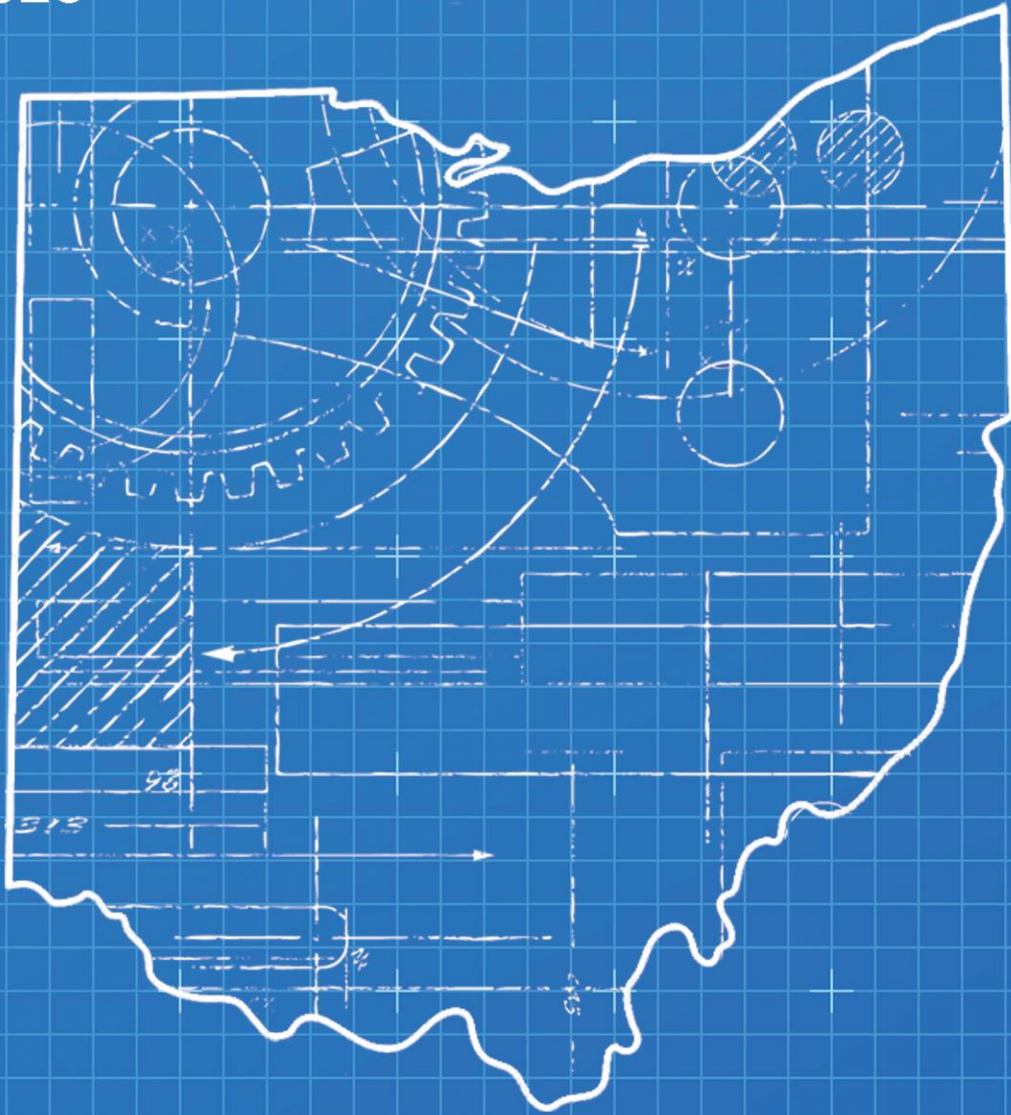


BLUEPRINT FOR OHIO'S ECONOMIC FUTURE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
JUNE 2026



OHIO CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

 **accenture**

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Letter from the CEO

Dear Ohioan,

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce operates with a simple and compelling vision: Making Ohio the best place in which to do business anywhere in the world.

When we first released the *Blueprint for Ohio's Economic Future* in 2022, our state was entering a new era of opportunity. Ohio was ranked 15th overall in CNBC's annual "Top States for Business" list. In that year's *Blueprint*, we highlighted Ohio's strengths, identified key challenges and outlined a policy framework that would help our state compete and win in a rapidly changing economy. Many of our proposed solutions from that report were utilized to help create legislation and public programs that advanced our vision. Then, in CNBC's most recent ranking released in 2025, Ohio was named the country's 5th-best state for business, our highest placement yet.



In the last four years, the pace of economic transformation has accelerated beyond what many could have imagined. Advances in artificial intelligence are reshaping entire industries. Global supply chains continue to evolve. New demands on our infrastructure and workforce systems emerge almost daily. At the same time, Ohio has secured transformative economic development wins and strengthened its position as a national leader in manufacturing, technology and logistics.

These changes call for a new strategy.

This refreshed *Blueprint* reflects our dedication to ensuring Ohio is prepared not only for the challenges of today, but also for the opportunities of the next decade. It is a comprehensive review of the policies needed to sustain our momentum and position Ohio for long-term success in an increasingly competitive global economy.

At the center of this effort is a clear objective: Ohio must pursue a sustained trajectory of at least 3% annual economic growth. Achieving that goal will require a continued commitment to creating the conditions that allow businesses, workers and communities to thrive.

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce remains committed to working alongside policymakers, business leaders and stakeholders across our state to advance solutions that promote growth and competitiveness. This *Blueprint for Ohio's Economic Future* serves as a roadmap for that work and a vision for what Ohio can become.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Stivers".

Steve Stivers
President & CEO
Ohio Chamber of Commerce

Introduction: Ohio is at a Turning Point

Ohio has long been a state that sees, and seizes, opportunity and innovation. From the Wright Brothers to the rise of advanced manufacturing, Ohio has consistently been a place where new ideas take shape and industries scale. Today, that legacy continues, with over 200 corporate headquarters, 55 Fortune 1000 companies, and transformative investments such as Intel's semiconductor campus positioning the state as the emerging "Silicon Heartland."

But while Ohio's foundation remains strong, the competitive landscape has shifted significantly since the 2022 Blueprint was released. States across the country have accelerated investments in talent, infrastructure, and innovation, raising the bar for what it takes to attract businesses, workers, and capital. At the same time, Ohio continues to face structural challenges, including population stagnation, workforce shortages, housing constraints, and uneven economic growth.

Recent national rankings reflect this tension. While Ohio has improved in several areas, it continues to lag in others critical to long-term competitiveness. As shown in the CNBC Top States for Business rankings,¹ Ohio ranks near the top nationally in infrastructure and cost of doing business, but continues to face challenges in education, talent, and overall economic performance.

From Strategy to Action: What Has Changed Since 2022

Since the original Blueprint, Ohio has taken meaningful steps to strengthen its economic foundation across all six levers. These actions represent a shift from strategy to implementation, translating priorities into tangible policy changes and investments.

Levers	Indicators	Levers	Indicators
Education and Workforce 	• K-12 Education • Higher Education • Workforce Participation/Labor Supply/Barriers • Labor Demand/New Job Growth	Sense of Place 	• Cost of Living and Affordability • Environment and Amenities • Social Determinants of Health
Since 2022 , the state expanded industry-aligned credentialing programs, invested in career pathways and training infrastructure, and restructured governance to better align education with workforce outcomes.		Since 2022 , Ohio increased investments in childcare, housing, and community revitalization, recognizing their direct link to workforce participation and talent attraction.	
Taxes and Costs 	• Taxes • Cost Of Doing Business • Legal Climate	Innovation and Collaboration 	• Startups, Entrepreneurship, and Venture Capital • Technology, Modernization and Data Centers
Since 2022 , the state continued to reduce income tax rates, eliminated the Commercial Activity Tax for approximately 90% of all Ohio businesses, and maintained a competitive cost structure for the business community.		Since 2022 , Ohio advanced sector-based strategies, including semiconductors and advanced manufacturing, while launching new regional innovation hubs.	
Business Friendliness 	• Regulatory and Licensing Landscape • Access to Capital • Economy and GSP Growth/Scenarios • Strategic Industry Growth Drivers	Infrastructure 	• Energy/Utilities/Water • Transportation
Since 2022 , Ohio streamlined regulations, expanded licensing reciprocity, and improved digital access to government services.		Since 2022 , the state made significant investments in broadband, site readiness, water systems, and industrial development capacity.	



From Blueprint to Brick: Tracking Our Policy Victories

A strategic roadmap is only as good as the execution it inspires. Since the release of the initial *Blueprint for Ohio's Economic Future* in 2022, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce has aggressively translated research into real-world advocacy. Working with the Ohio General Assemblies, our policy teams have successfully enacted cornerstone recommendations across all six economic levers.

By proving that the Blueprint directly drives the state's legislative agenda, these historic legislative wins demonstrate clear return on investment for Ohio's business community.

Major Policy Wins: Legislative Priorities Delivered



Education and Workforce Policy Wins

The Multi-Million Dollar Childcare Platform Deployment²

We successfully advanced a foundational portion of the Chamber's Child Care Platform to attack access and affordability problems related to childcare throttling workforce participation. Active programs currently in effect include:

- *The Child Care Choice Voucher Program*³: A \$200 million commitment expanding eligibility up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level to serve 20,000 additional children.
- *The Child Care Cred Program*⁴: A \$10 million public-private voluntary cost-sharing partnership among employers, workers, and the state
- *The Child Care Recruitment and Mentorship Grant Program*⁵: Deploying \$3.2 million to expand in-home provider footprints across rural areas

A significant organizational overhaul occurred in 2023 in the state operating budget, as the Ohio General Assembly restructured both the Ohio Department of Education and State Board of Education to provide stronger emphasis on workforce skills and career readiness. The former Ohio Department of Education was transformed into a state-level agency called the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (DEW), with a dual focus on primary and secondary education and preparing students for the workforce. The department is now led by a Director who is appointed by the Governor and subject to the advice and consent of the Senate. The Department consists of two divisions: the Division of Primary and Secondary Education, and the Division of Career Technical Education, with both divisions headed by deputy directors appointed by the Director. The Department is generally responsible for enforcing rules under the Ohio Administrative Code and adopting new rules as required by law. This design is meant to promote communication and collaboration between schools and education leaders to ensure accountability and transparency.

The Ohio Chamber heavily supported this initiative, believing that a greater emphasis must be placed on ensuring accountability for Ohio's education system and career readiness for Ohio's students. Through the creation of a statewide agency directly accountable to elected officials, the Ohio Chamber believes this arrangement will encourage more younger Ohioans to remain in and build their lives here in Ohio, making for brighter futures.

K-12 and Post-Secondary Computer Science Scaling

Continuous expansion of the *Teach CS* program via an \$8 million biennial commitment paired with an ongoing K-12 teacher licensure waiver, enabling educators who complete approved professional development programs to immediately fill critical computer science teaching slots. (*Enacted through HB 33 – State Budget: 135th GA*)⁶

Governance and Restructuring

The comprehensive restructuring of the Ohio Department of Education and the State Board of Education institutionalized a permanent, state-level prioritization of career-technical skills and immediate workforce readiness. (*SB 1 / HB 12: Enacted through HB 33 – State Budget: 135th GA*)^{6,7}

Free-Market Principles in Classrooms

Integrated academic concepts detailing free-market capitalism into the mandatory high school financial literacy and entrepreneurship curriculums for grades 9–12. (*SB 17: 135th GA*)⁸

Mitigating the MBIWD Benefits Cliff

Eliminated the historical age cap for the Medicaid Buy-In for Workers with Disabilities program, allowing skilled, disabled Ohioans age 65 and older to maintain gainful employment without abruptly forfeiting their healthcare access. (*Enacted through HB 33 – State Budget: 135th GA*)⁶

From Blueprint to Brick: Tracking Our Policy Victories



Sense of Place Policy Wins

Increasing Ohio's Housing Availability (*Enacted through HB 33 – State Budget: 135th GA*)⁶

- **Statewide Housing Tax Credits:** Creation and reauthorization of a state Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program to develop new affordable housing units
- **Rural Housing Infrastructure Support:** Activating a \$90 million *Residential Development Revolving Loan Program* specifically tailored to fund the high-cost baseline utility and road infrastructure necessary to unlock housing construction in rural regions
- **Residential Economic Development District Program:** Deploying a \$25 million incentive fund designed to directly reward local municipalities that proactively streamline and modernize their local zoning codes to accommodate efficient housing construction
- **Miscellaneous:** Extensions of the Transformational Mixed-Use Development Program (TMUD) and State Historic Tax Credit (HTC), protection from referendums for housing developments constructed in conjunction with mega project developments, increase in the signature threshold for referendums to be placed on the ballot from 15% to 35% in townships, Home Rule townships, and statutory cities, and a doubling of the annual Opportunity Zone tax credit cap to \$50M per fiscal year

Launching the Certified Mental Health Assistant Licensure

Standing up a brand-new, pioneering medical licensure class to rapidly scale Ohio's behavioral health and recovery services workforce. (*SB 60: 135th GA*)⁹

Remote Pharmacy Dispensing Authorization

Gives Ohioans the ability to fill their prescriptions at a pharmacy where the supervising pharmacist is operating remotely, allowing Ohioans greater access to pharmacy care. (*SB 95: 135th GA*)¹⁰

Sustained Tourism and Placemaking Marketing

Successfully increased TourismOhio's biennial marketing budget from \$15 million to \$22 million, while developing strategies to leverage the state's unclaimed property fund to anchor long-term, year-round tourism assets like the Brook Park domed-stadium development.¹¹



Taxes and Costs Policy Wins

Securing JobsOhio's 15-Year Funding Horizon

Successfully secured the historic 15-year extension of the JobsOhio liquor franchise, an Ohio Chamber initiative providing nearly \$1 billion in upgraded long-term capacity to attract global business expansions and competitive incentives. (*Enacted through HB 33 – State Budget: 135th GA*)⁶

Implementing critical property tax reform

Enacted critical, coalition-developed safeguards for property tax calculations including *House Bill 129: 136th GA* to protect school district funding floors and *House Bill 186: 136th GA* to ensure voted school levy revenues do not outpace the rate of inflation.^{12,13}

Commercial Activity Tax (CAT) Exemptions

Legislative leaders utilized the Ohio Chamber's recommendations for a phased exemption from the CAT for taxable gross receipts of \$3M or less in FY24, and taxable gross receipts of \$6M or less in FY25 and subsequent years. These exemptions have eliminated the CAT for approximately 90% of all Ohio businesses.⁶

Defeat of PBM Prescription Dispensing Fee Language

During the state operating budget process, the Ohio Chamber led the successful effort in the Ohio Senate to remove language mandating the Ohio Department of Insurance to set a dispensing fee - estimated to range from \$10.50 to \$15.47 - on every prescription filled in Ohio through Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs). This fee, conservatively estimated to generate \$6.4 billion over the next decade, which would then be re-distributed to independent pharmacies, would have substantially increased healthcare and prescription drug costs for employers and patients alike.¹¹

From Blueprint to Brick: Tracking Our Policy Victories



Innovation and Collaboration Policy Wins

The \$125M Innovation Hubs Launch

Directly modeled after our major metro Innovation Districts, the Chamber successfully advocated for \$125 million in state operating budget funding to create Innovation Hubs in mid-sized Ohio metropolitan centers, pairing regional businesses with higher education anchors. (HB 96: 135th GA)¹¹

Corporate Identity Theft Protections

Passed *Senate Bill 98: 135th GA*, establishing an ironclad reporting mechanism to crack down on fraudulent business filings, misleading mailers charging excessive fees for free public services, and the exploitation of dormant business filings by bad actors.¹⁴



Business Friendliness Policy Wins

The Reduction of Administrative Red Tape

Successfully codified a mandate via *Innovate the Code* to eliminate duplicative, obsolete provisions and target up to a one-third total reduction of words and regulatory restrictions across the Ohio Administrative Code. (HB 33: 135th GA)⁶

Bolstering Employer Protections in Marijuana Policies

Enacted *Senate Bill 56: 136th GA*, structurally protecting drug-free and zero-tolerance workplace policies from anti-discrimination claims, clarifying that marijuana-related terminations represent "just-cause" exclusions from unemployment benefits, and restricting public usage to private residences, protecting private property rights by giving landlords authority to ban use and cultivation in residential units through lease agreements.¹⁵

Limiting Asbestos Lawsuit Over Naming

Passed *Senate Bill 63: 135th GA*, forcing plaintiff attorneys to provide explicit evidentiary documentation tying a specific business to exposure before filing, preventing completely uninvolved employers from incurring defensive legal fees.¹⁶

Modernizing Labor Poster Compliance

Codified *Senate Bill 33: 136th GA*, allowing businesses the cost-saving and administrative flexibility to post mandatory employment law updates online for distributed workforces.¹⁷

Universal Occupational Licensure Reciprocity

Enacted *Senate Bill 131: 134th GA*, which offered a host of reforms to Ohio's system of occupational licensing and government certifications, with the most significant being the establishment of universal occupational licensure reciprocity. By recognizing occupational licenses from other states, *SB 131* not only reduces or even eliminates certain re-licensing costs, but it also supplies Ohio with trained professionals having the skills to match in demand career fields.¹⁸

Minimizing Administrative Burdens with Appealing Action Taken by Ohio's Executive Agencies

Give Ohio business owners the option to appeal administrative actions in their local common pleas court, rather than the home county of the state agency. (SB 21: 135th GA)¹⁹



From Blueprint to Brick: Tracking Our Policy Victories

 Infrastructure Policy Wins	
Standardizing State Mineral Sinking Rules Adopted an administrative rule creating uniform lease frameworks for mineral development on Tier I and Tier II state lands with zero surface impact, expanding domestic fuel availability. <i>(Enacted through Ohio Administrative Rule 1501:155-1-01)</i> ²⁰	Strengthening Natural Gas Infrastructure Development Actively executing <i>Senate Bill 103: 136th GA</i> , which systematically tightens the regulatory timelines for capital recovery, allowing natural gas utilities to fast-track major economic development corridor upgrades with minimal regulatory lag. ²¹
PILOT Extension Extension of the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) Program for four years, giving counties the continued, permissive option to determine how to tax renewable energy projects and spurring renewable energy development and investment. <i>(HB 33: 135th GA)</i> ⁶	Extension of the State Capital Improvement Program (SCIP) Successful extension of a constitutional amendment for SCIP at the Ohio Public Works Commission, allowing an additional \$2.5B of general obligation bonds. Important projects funded by the SCIP include roads, bridges, wastewater treatment systems, water supply systems, solid waste disposal facilities, and stormwater and sanitary collection. ²²
Strengthening Ohio's Energy Infrastructure Endorsed reducing the Tangible Personal Property Tax on all forms of new generation/storage, encouraging the adoption of Grid-Enhancing Technologies (GETs), incentivizing energy development on brownfields, requiring utilities to publish heat and capacity maps of the distribution system on a "need to know basis", and the instituting of timelines for regulatory review of generation permits and rate cases. <i>(HB 15: 136th GA)</i> ²³ • Reduce Tangible Personal Property Tax for Pipeline Companies: Amended into House Bill 15, this measure reduces the tangible personal property tax rate for pipeline companies from 88% to 25%. The reduced 25% rate will apply to new pipeline construction, while existing infrastructure remains at 88%. This reforms a tax rate that is higher than any of Ohio's neighboring states, and addresses Ohio's increasing need for both energy generation and distribution.	
Pole Replacement and Undergrounding Program Successfully pushed for an appropriation of \$50M to create the Ohio Broadband Pole Replacement and Undergrounding Program, to fund replacement of outdated poles, construction of new poles, and assorted other make-ready costs involved with expanding broadband infrastructure along utility routes. ¹¹	Preservation of All-Ohio Future Fund During budget deliberations, the Ohio Chamber successfully advocated for the Ohio General Assembly to preserve a portion of the remaining All-Ohio Future Fund and consider appropriations to aid in the completion of multiple sites to ensure Ohio's continued economic competitiveness. The legislature responded by reserving nearly \$226 million in funds to support site development for four transformational economic development projects in Montgomery, Lorain, Coshocton, and Muskingum Counties. On July 21, 2025, the Ohio Controlling Board met and approved funding for these four projects across the state to receive All-Ohio Future Funds. ^{11,24}



Ohio's Progress is Real, but Uneven

Measurable Progress, and Where It Shows Up

Ohio's policy and investment decisions since 2022 have translated into measurable gains in key areas of competitiveness, particularly where the state has made targeted, coordinated investments.

As shown in the CNBC rankings¹:

- Infrastructure improved significantly, with Ohio now ranking 1st nationally, reflecting major investments in broadband, site readiness, and logistics capacity.
- Cost of doing business improved to 2nd, reinforcing Ohio's longstanding affordability advantage.
- Technology and innovation rose to 6th, driven by major industry investments and expanded R&D activity.
- Business Friendliness (regulatory) improved substantially, moving from 47th to 25th, reflecting regulatory streamlining efforts.
- Quality of life (health) and cost of living also saw notable gains.

At the same time, other areas have seen more limited progress or decline:

- Education rankings fell, highlighting ongoing challenges in talent development and alignment.
- Economy rankings declined, suggesting that growth has not kept pace with peer states.
- Workforce improved modestly but remains a constraint on long-term growth.

This mixed performance underscores a critical point: progress has been real, but uneven. Gains in infrastructure, cost competitiveness, and innovation have been partially offset by slower progress in talent and economic growth.

CNBC Top States for Business Ranking

Metric	2021 Ranking	2025 Ranking	Direction of Change
Infrastructure	11 th	1 st	
Cost of Doing Business	4 th	2 nd	
Technology and Innovation (R&D)	15 th	6 th	
Access to Capital	7 th	7 th	
Cost of Living (Affordability)	14 th	7 th	
Quality of Life (Health)	34 th	17 th	
Economy	15 th	26 th	
Business Friendliness (Regulatory)	47 th	25 th	
Education	21 st	27 th	
Workforce	38 th	31 st	

A More Competitive, and Faster-Moving, Landscape

Ohio's progress must also be viewed in context. The challenge is not simply improving performance; it is improving faster than competing states.

Since 2022, peer states have:

- Implemented aggressive tax reforms
- Expanded workforce and education investments
- Accelerated site readiness and energy infrastructure
- Targeted emerging industries with coordinated strategies

As a result, maintaining Ohio's position now requires not just continued improvement, but greater speed, alignment, and scale.



The Mandate for Growth

The Core Challenge Going Forward

The experience since 2022 highlights a clear pattern:

- Where Ohio has made targeted, well-funded, and coordinated investments, it has seen measurable gains (e.g., infrastructure, cost, innovation)
- Where progress has been fragmented or incremental, results have lagged (e.g., education, workforce, economic growth), limiting Ohio's ability to reach its full growth potential and achieve a top-tier economic growth trajectory

BEFORE 2022		AFTER 2025
700B	REAL GDP ²⁵	720B
0.4%	REAL GDP GROWTH ²⁵	2.0%
5.65M	NONFARM EMPLOYMENT ²⁶	5.71M
11.7M	POPULATION ²⁷	11.9M
-2.6%	PRODUCTIVITY ²⁸	1.8%

Looking Ahead

The refreshed Blueprint builds on the strong foundation established in 2022, while adapting to a more competitive and rapidly evolving environment. It focuses on six core levers: Education and Workforce, Sense of Place, Taxes and Costs, Innovation and Collaboration, Infrastructure, and Business Friendliness, and provides a more integrated, outcomes-driven roadmap for the state.

The goal is not only to maintain Ohio's advantages, but to close persistent gaps and position the state to achieve sustained, long-term growth, aligned with a 3% annual GDP growth trajectory consistent with national business competitiveness benchmarks.²⁹

3%

Annual GDP
Growth Goal

This creates a clear mandate for the next phase of the Blueprint: Ohio does not need to rethink its strategy, it needs to execute it more cohesively, more aggressively, and with greater focus on outcomes

“

As someone who is from California, there are some states that are really good at pushing you out and slowing you down, and there's others that are great at pulling you in and speeding you up. That's what Ohio was.”

- Palmer Luckey, Founder of Anduril



Executive Summary

Ohio stands at a pivotal moment. The state enters the next decade with significant competitive advantages: a globally relevant manufacturing base, growing innovation sectors, nationally recognized infrastructure assets, abundant energy and water resources, and a lower-cost operating environment than many competing states. Major investments in semiconductors, advanced manufacturing, aerospace, healthcare, and digital infrastructure are reshaping Ohio's economic trajectory and positioning the state as an emerging center of industrial and technological growth.

Since the original Blueprint for Ohio's Economic Future was released in 2022, Ohio has made meaningful progress across many of the foundational drivers of competitiveness. The state has improved its national standing in infrastructure, cost of doing business, technology and innovation, and regulatory environment. Strategic investments in broadband, site readiness, workforce programs, and innovation ecosystems have strengthened Ohio's ability to attract investment and support business growth.

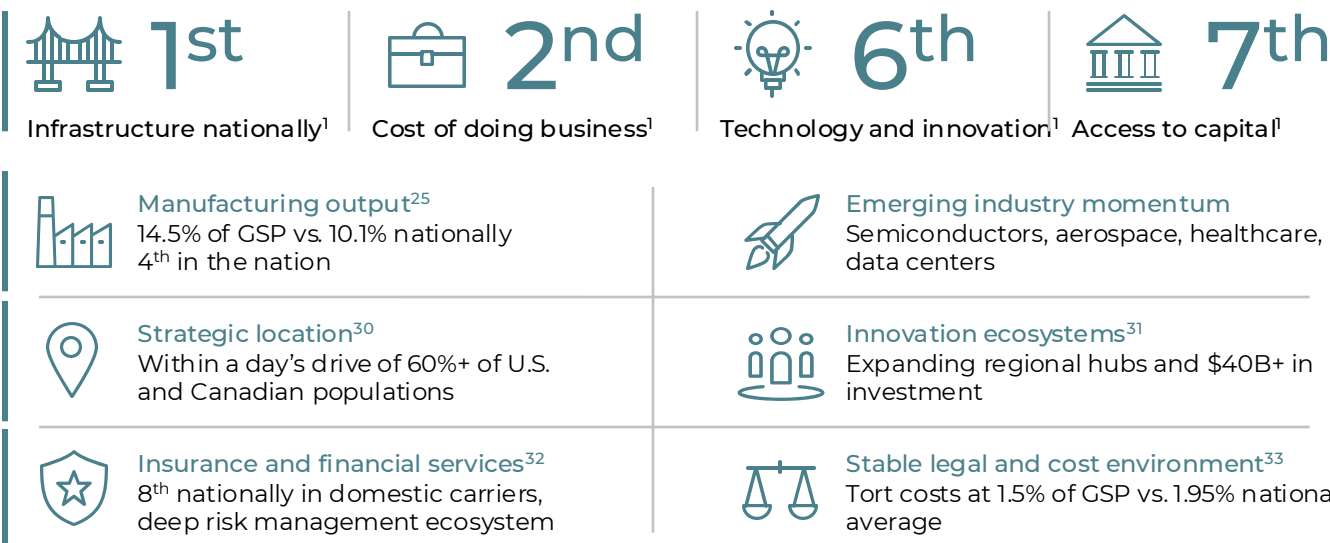
At the same time, the competitive landscape has changed rapidly. States across the country are accelerating investments in talent, housing, energy infrastructure, innovation, and quality of place. Emerging technologies, shifting global supply chains, demographic change, and rising infrastructure demands are reshaping how states compete for businesses, workers, and capital. While Ohio's progress is real, it has also been uneven. Persistent challenges, including workforce shortages, population stagnation, housing constraints, healthcare affordability pressures, and fragmented systems, continue to limit the state's full growth potential.

The core challenge facing Ohio is no longer identifying its strengths. It is executing more cohesively, more quickly, and at greater scale than competing states.

This refreshed Blueprint examines Ohio's competitiveness across six interconnected levers:



These levers are deeply interdependent. Workforce participation is influenced by housing affordability, childcare access, transportation, and health outcomes. Innovation depends on talent, infrastructure, capital access, and energy reliability. Business growth increasingly depends not only on taxes and regulation, but also on digital readiness, infrastructure capacity, and quality of life.



Executive Summary Continued

To identify areas of opportunity to improve Ohio's business climate, each of the national indices was deconstructed. Inputs to each factor were examined and areas where Ohio was ranked low nationally were identified. From here, in-person workshops were held and stakeholder engagement with business leaders was conducted to explore policy recommendations that could help to advance Ohio and elevate the state to the most business-friendly state in the nation.

Levers	Recommendations
Education and Workforce 	• Scale Employer-Led Paid Work-Based Learning Through Public-Private Partnerships • Align Credentials and Training to In-Demand Jobs Through Integrated Systems and Shared Data • Expand Workforce Participation and Retain Talent Through Flexible and Targeted Employment Strategies • Advance Policies That Expand, Diversify, and Retain the K-12 Teacher Workforce While Aligning With Future Workforce Needs
Sense of Place 	• Strengthen Essential Support Systems to Enhance Health and Well-Being • Accelerate Housing Supply to Protect Ohio's Cost-of-Living Advantage • Strengthen Ohio's Competitive Identity Through Placemaking, Tourism, and Quality-of-Life Investments
Taxes and Costs 	• Modernize and Simplify Ohio's Tax Structure to Reduce Compliance Burden and Improve Competitiveness • Preserve and Strengthen Ohio's Cost-of-Doing-Business Advantage While Protecting Stability • Improve Long-Term Competitiveness Through Targeted Tax and Process Reforms
Innovation and Collaboration 	• Refresh Ohio's Third Frontier Strategy with a Sector-Focused, Public-Private Investment Model • Scale Commercialization and Early-Stage Capital to Convert R&D Strength into Scalable Investment • Leverage Data Centers as Innovation Anchors and Catalysts for AI-Driven Manufacturing • Enact Balanced and Comprehensive Data Privacy Legislation
Business Friendliness 	• Improve Regulatory Certainty, Transparency, and Predictability • Streamline Business Formation, Licensing, and Site Readiness • Proactively Enable the Growth and Scaling of High-Impact Industries
Infrastructure 	• Establish Coordinated Statewide Energy Leadership to Support Growth and Competitiveness • Launch a Coordinated Statewide Water and Sewer Infrastructure Growth Strategy • Protect and Enhance Ohio's Logistics Advantage Through Targeted Transportation Investment • Accelerate Next-Generation Broadband Infrastructure and Digital Capacity



Education and Workforce Recommendations



Scale Employer-Led Paid Work-Based Learning Through Public-Private Partnerships

- Promote employer-led work-based training and position employers as co-designers of talent pipelines
- Support efforts to increase labor force participation of 16–24-year-olds
- Expand and differentiate work-based learning programs through scale and credential portability
- Embed work-based learning into education and training pathways
- Expand access to financial aid for short-term and non-degree credentials and improve FAFSA completion

Align Credentials and Training to In-Demand Jobs Through Integrated Systems and Shared Data

- Focus public investment on high-demand occupations
- Strengthen employer-driven credential alignment
- Expand access to reskilling and upskilling pathways
- Build a fully integrated education-workforce data system
- Strengthen early career awareness and K-12 exposure
- Use outcomes data to guide policy and investment decisions
- Pilot globally recognized, industry-validated micro-credentials in priority sectors

Expand Workforce Participation and Retain Talent Through Flexible and Targeted Employment Strategies

- Remove childcare as a barrier for caregivers and treat childcare and elder care as core workforce priorities in high-growth regions
- Pursue strategies to alleviate public assistance benefits cliffs
- Consider recruitment campaigns, incentives and advocacy to recruit and retain top talent
- Foster a culture more explicitly supportive and inclusive of foreign workers and international students
- Expand flexible, part-time, and phased-retirement options to retain experienced workers

Advance Policies That Expand, Diversify, and Retain the K-12 Teacher Workforce While Aligning With Future Workforce Needs

- Expand alternative and accelerated pathways into teaching for mid-career professionals
- Align teacher preparation with high-need subject areas (e.g., STEM, computer science, career-technical education)
- Strengthen retention incentives and career pathways for educators in hard-to-staff districts



Sense of Place Recommendations



Strengthen Essential Support Systems to Enhance Health and Well-Being

- Increase residents' ability to access care by improving and enhancing delivery systems as well as through flexible community-based models
- Make efforts to eliminate health disparities via targeted outreach to at-risk communities
- Increase awareness and access to addiction treatment, harm reduction and mental health services
- Address mental health and addiction as economic participation constraints
- Strengthen network adequacy standards for commercial health plans
- Strengthen pharmacy access and employer transparency to support community infrastructure
- Strengthen aging and long-term care supports to sustain workforce participation and manage long-term costs

Accelerate Housing Supply to Protect Ohio's Cost-of-Living Advantage

- Make dedicated efforts to increase home ownership
- Make efforts to provide affordable rent
- Reduce regulatory and zoning barriers that limit housing supply
- Address rural and urban housing pressures through targeted strategies
- Encourage new construction methods and housing innovation
- Encourage adaptive reuse and downtown revitalization strategies

Strengthen Ohio's Competitive Identity Through Placemaking, Tourism, and Quality-of-Life Investments

- Capitalize on Ohio's unique features including parks, museums, and entertainment venues for compelling first impressions and leverage amenities to strengthen regional competitiveness
- Utilize public-private partnerships to maximize economic opportunities in conjunction with recreational assets
- Integrate arts, tourism, and sports into state and regional economic strategies



Taxes and Costs Recommendations



Modernize and Simplify Ohio's Tax Structure to Reduce Compliance Burden and Improve Competitiveness

- Establish a centralized municipal tax administration framework through the Ohio Department of Taxation to reduce complexity and administrative burden
- Address municipal workplace vs residence tax withholding as this creates an administrative burden for the employer
- Conduct a comprehensive tax structure review, including a CAT marginality audit, to identify and address structural inefficiencies
- Enact updates to the Taxpayer Bill of Rights (*House Bill 613/Senate Bill 359*)
- Encourage shared services and administrative consolidation among local governments where appropriate

Preserve and Strengthen Ohio's Cost-of-Doing-Business Advantage While Protecting Stability

- Perform a review of incentives to ensure they attract and retain business operations in Ohio
- Analyze any proposed tax changes to consider the impact on services that benefit businesses and communities, such as education, public safety and infrastructure
- Ensure any reforms provide municipalities with adequate funding for key local services
- Address rising employer healthcare costs as a competitiveness issue and improve system efficiency

Improve Long-Term Competitiveness Through Targeted Tax and Process Reforms

- Eliminate or significantly reduce state taxation of capital gains to support business formation, retention, and investment
- Strengthen process transparency across tax administration
- Modernize economic development incentives to compete for investment



Innovation and Collaboration Recommendations



Refresh Ohio's Third Frontier Strategy with a Sector-Focused, Public-Private Investment Model

- Continue to expand venture capital and private equity investments throughout Ohio and to a wider array of industries and types of startups
- Modernize and expand Ohio's fund-of-funds strategy
- Support manufacturers to realize greater efficiencies and higher output through innovative advancements
- Sharpen statewide innovation priorities
- Launch a statewide AI and digital readiness initiative
- Strengthen university-industry R&D partnership
- Establish a sector-focused innovation investment strategy

Scale Commercialization and Early-Stage Capital to Convert R&D Strength into Scalable Investment

- Advocate for and advertise small business and minority business development centers, innovation districts and the creation of a small business ombudsman
- Create support programs that provide low-interest or no-interest loans and grants to promising small businesses
- Expand proof-of-concept and early commercialization funding
- Strengthen tech transfer and founder support ecosystems
- Establish a hard-tech commercialization bridge fund (SBIR/STTR Matching 2.0)
- Grow state-backed seed and growth-stage capital
- Encourage corporate-led innovation and industry adoption
- Establish regulatory sandboxes and phased compliance pathways

Leverage Data Centers as Innovation Anchors and Catalysts for AI-Driven Manufacturing

- Align data center growth with workforce and cluster strategies
- Use data centers to accelerate AI adoption in manufacturing
- Build regional innovation hubs around data and digital infrastructure
- Maximize economic spillover from data center investments

Enact Balanced and Comprehensive Data Privacy Legislation

- Examine comprehensive data privacy legislation to:
 - Equip Ohioans with consumer rights and recourse related to their personal data
 - Promote a business environment that incentivizes implementation of cybersecurity protections of sensitive information

Business Friendliness Recommendations



Improve Regulatory Certainty, Transparency, and Predictability

- Revisit current cleanup efforts through Cut Red Tape Ohio and the Common Sense Initiative in order to maximize impact
- Review and reduce occupational licensing restrictions where applicable
- Improve transparency in the application process, with links to direct contact information, timelines for completions at each stage, costs and the number of procedural steps related to each application
- Expand the use of regulatory sandboxes and pilot-friendly approaches
- Explore the use of advanced technology to improve regulatory efficiency
- Strengthen Ohio's legal and tort environment

Streamline Business Formation, Licensing, and Site Readiness

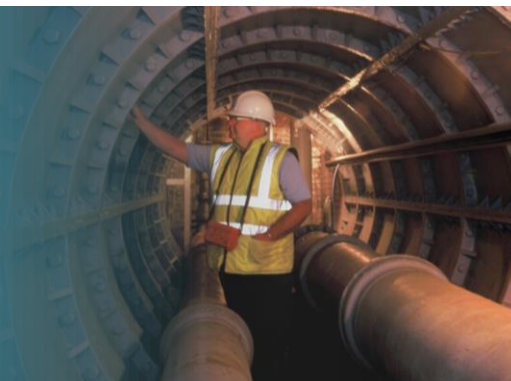
- Examine the coordination of all licenses and permits across governmental layers to determine where duplicative efforts create burden and identify opportunities for standardization
- Reduce licensing or permitting barriers to entry for those opening or relocating a business to Ohio
- Expand brownfield and site redevelopment efforts
- Advance government effectiveness through efficiency efforts
- Enhance support for small and mid-sized businesses
- Expand access to capital through targeted financing tools for small businesses and startups

Proactively Enable the Growth and Scaling of High-Impact Industries

- Reduce expansion friction for high-growth employers
- Tailor business-facing processes to priority industries
- Improve certainty for capital-intensive and long-horizon investments



Infrastructure Recommendations



Establish Coordinated Statewide Energy Leadership to Support Growth and Competitiveness

- Harden the grid and enable faster project delivery in the face of weather and peak demand
- Continue to improve access to natural gas in constrained urban and rural areas to meet current needs and demand for future growth
- Increase and diversify electric generation in Ohio to support consumption needs
- Position Ohio as an energy net exporter
- Create a statewide energy leadership role
- Enable distributed and behind-the-meter generation
- Strengthen transmission planning, oversight, and cost control
- Restore Ohio's data center equipment sales and use tax exemption, modify it with accountability provisions, and eliminate any doubt about whether Ohio wishes to compete for this industry

Launch a Coordinated Statewide Water and Sewer Infrastructure Growth Strategy

- Target water and sewer investments near mega-projects and growth corridors
- Close funding gaps across water, wastewater, and stormwater systems
- Improve long-term water planning and regional coordination
- Strengthen infrastructure resilience and reliability
- Coordinate water, wastewater, energy, and site readiness for large-scale users

Protect and Enhance Ohio's Logistics Advantage Through Targeted Transportation Investment

- Explore innovative, cost-effective ways to better connect rural and suburban residents to economic centers
- Expand employer mobility programs to improve workforce access and labor force participation
- Ensure sustainable road funding in a changing revenue environment
- Expand use of public-private partnerships and innovative financing
- Support advanced and autonomous transportation technologies
- Prioritize long-haul freight and multimodal connectivity

Accelerate Next-Generation Broadband Infrastructure and Digital Capacity

- Identify funding opportunities to improve/update broadband infrastructure
- Advance a comprehensive strategy to expand, modernize, and future-proof Ohio's broadband ecosystem, ensuring reliable, high-speed connectivity for residents, businesses, and emerging industries
- Improve local permitting processes to allow for new market entrants and upgrades and expansion of legacy broadband infrastructure

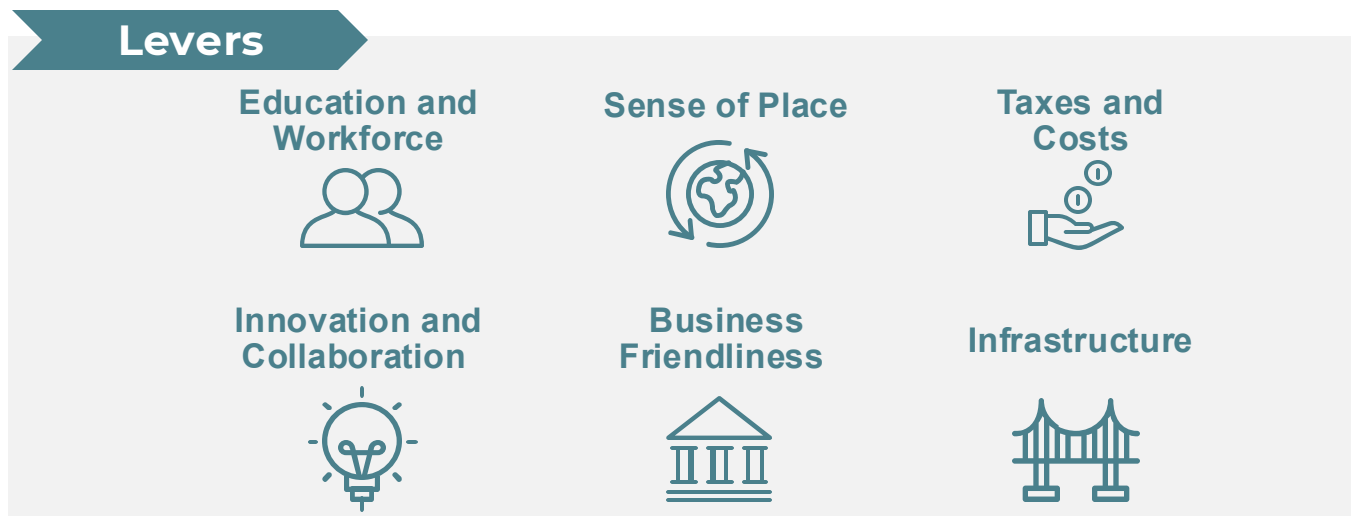


Conclusion

Ohio enters the next decade with significant competitive advantages: a strong manufacturing base, growing innovation sectors, strategic infrastructure assets, and a lower-cost operating environment than many peer states. But sustaining long-term growth will require more than preserving existing strengths. The state's future competitiveness will depend on its ability to execute with greater speed, coordination, and scale across talent development, infrastructure capacity, innovation, affordability, and business climate modernization.

The opportunities outlined throughout this Blueprint are interconnected, and progress in one area will increasingly depend on alignment across all six levers. If Ohio can successfully modernize its systems, expand workforce participation, accelerate technology adoption, and proactively invest in the foundations of growth, the state is well positioned not only to remain competitive, but to emerge as a national leader in advanced industry, innovation, and economic resilience over the coming decade.

The mandate for the next phase is not to rethink strategy — it is to execute it more cohesively. Ohio has the resources, the institutional strength, and the policy momentum to lead. With the support of Ohio's business community, policymakers, and civic leaders working in concert across all six levers, the state is positioned not only to remain competitive, but to set the standard for advanced industry, inclusive growth, and economic resilience in the decade ahead.



With your support, we will improve our business climate and grow our economy for the benefit of all Ohioans



NOTES

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