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Contact: Dan Bowerman at (614) 813-6235
Dan.Bowerman@development.ohio.gov

Ohio Receives \$5 Million Grant to Boost Defense Manufacturing

(COLUMBUS, Ohio) — Ohio Governor Mike DeWine and Lt. Governor Jon Husted today announced that the U.S. Department of Defense has approved a \$5 million grant to improve defense manufacturing processes in the state and train workers for next-generation jobs.

The grant follows an announcement in August designating Ohio as a Defense Manufacturing Community. It is a program designed to support long-term community investments that strengthen national security innovation and expand the capabilities of defense manufacturing.

“Ohio is positioned to be the premier state for defense manufacturing, and this grant will help our companies and workers achieve that,” Governor DeWine said. “Ohio is committed to ensuring that our military has the best equipment and resources available.”

The \$5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Defense will be supplemented by a \$1.25 million cash match, which includes \$650,000 from the Ohio Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) and \$600,000 in project income and partner contributions.

“Ohio is building the workforce of tomorrow, and this grant will help more workers develop the tech skills that will allow Ohio companies to be on the leading edge of defense manufacturing,” Lt. Governor Jon Husted said. “We have created a tech-friendly environment that is making Ohio a leader in the United States.”

The Ohio Development Services Agency led the effort for the state to be designated as a Defense Manufacturing Community and to secure the grant. MEP, which is a program within Development, will take the lead in the project and will be aided by numerous organizations and businesses throughout the state, including the Ohio Manufacturers’ Association, JobsOhio, Dayton Development Coalition, America Makes, and Advanced Robotics for Manufacturing.

“Ohio is, and will continue to be, on the forefront of military readiness, as well as workforce development,” U.S. Representative Steve Stivers said. “This grant will help ensure that Ohioans are leading the way in the future of work, and the future of technology development.”

The funding will go to MEP’s partners in the project: Ohio MEP at Center for Innovative Food Technology (CIFT), Ohio MEP at Columbus State Community College, Ohio MEP at FASTLANE – University of Dayton Research Institute, Ohio MEP at MAGNET, Ohio MEP at TechSolve, The Ohio State University – Center for Design and Manufacturing Excellence, and the Ohio Aerospace Institute.

These partners will establish projects in engineering and implementation of Industry 4.0 and Advanced Manufacturing Technology. The projects will be unique to each of the small to medium-sized defense manufacturers and will include a plan for improved processes, increased production, and product innovation. The manufacturer will be required to pay part of the costs of the implementation.

The project also will include a structure using these partners: the Ohio Manufacturers' Association, America Makes, and Lorain County Community College and Automation and Robotics for Manufacturing Institute. These partners will establish the credentials and training to upskill and reskill the workforce to meet the needs of the Industry 4.0 equipment and production process needs.

"The resources of the state combined with the expertise of our partners ensures we will be successful in making Ohio's defense industry stronger," said Lydia Mihalik, director of the Development Services Agency. "This project follows the Administration's goals of helping Ohio businesses grow and helping Ohio workers increase their skills."

Ohio MEP and its partners are ready to hit the ground running. The program will start immediately, and the work will be completed over the next three years.

Project timeline:

- At least 26 advanced manufacturing projects will be performed over the three years, including six in the first year and 10 in each of the following two years.
- A minimum of 400 new credentials will be awarded to workers, including 75 in the first year, 125 in the second, and 200 in the third.
- With improved manufacturing processes and an improved supply chain, at least 50 new products will be manufactured and 20 new manufacturers will join the defense supply chain.

Immediately following the award, several working groups will be set up to complete the details of the program, provide input on any challenges, and communicate with the Office of Economic Adjustment at the Department of Defense:

- The Industry Leadership Working Group will be made up of Ohio's defense original equipment manufacturers, small and medium-sized defense manufacturers, and several key organizations and agencies engaged in defense manufacturing support.
- The Strategic Leadership Working Group will include the Ohio MEPs and members of other key partners.
- The Implementation Working Group will include the Ohio MEPs, JobsOhio, and the Ohio Manufacturers' Association Sector Partnerships.

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