

Preparing for PORTS Site Reindustrialization Final Summary and Workforce Readiness Recommendations

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1 Workforce Strength and Challenges

The Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission (OVRDC) region has a total workforce of 214,892 aged 16 and over ([IMPLAN® Model, 2022](#)), offering a diverse talent pool and specialized industry expertise, making it a key area for workforce development and economic development. The region's labor market strengths lie in traditional industries, including hospitality, transportation, logistics, education, healthcare, manufacturing, and construction. These occupations are highly concentrated in the region, suggesting competitive workforce advantages with well-established expertise.

However, not all concentrated occupations offer long-term stability. Several roles with strong regional specialization, such as Cashiers, Home Health Aides, Stockers and Order Fillers, and Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks, are projected to decline by 2032. For instance, Cashiers alone are projected to lose more than 225 jobs, representing a decline of approximately 4% in total employment for this occupation.

Using the long-term employment forecast, we identify 14 occupations in the region that are expected to experience notable employment declines. Many of these roles—such as cashiers, administrative assistants, janitors, and home health aides—are typically routine, lower-wage, and labor-intensive. These workers are at high risk of economic displacement since their jobs are highly specialized in the region but are projected to decline due to structural shifts in the economy. This trend highlights the importance of targeted workforce strategies in supporting economic resilience and enhancing worker mobility.

2 New Opportunities from the PORT Site Redevelopment

The redevelopment of the PORTS site in Pike County presents a transformative opportunity for the OVRDC region. Major developers, such as Trillium H2 Power and Centrus Energy, anticipate hiring thousands of workers across their construction and operational phases. During the construction phase alone, Trillium plans to hire over 3,300 workers, while Centrus Energy expects to hire more than 250. Key construction occupations in demand include construction laborers, electricians, pipefitters, heavy equipment operators, and welders. These jobs offer competitive compensation ranging from \$20 to over \$95 per hour, depending on role and skill level.

During the operations and maintenance phase, both Trillium and Centrus Energy anticipate smaller but steady long-term hiring, with a focus on technical and supervisory roles. Trillium plans to hire approximately 268 employees for their operational phase, with high-demand occupations

in production, business and financial operations, engineering, and management. Other positions include roles in science, office support, IT, and transportation, with wages ranging from \$20 to \$75 per hour. Centrus Energy expects to hire around 243 workers in operations, engineering, maintenance, and supervisory roles. Most positions will offer annual salaries between \$70,000 and \$130,000, with some management roles reaching up to \$150,000. Both companies emphasize stability, long-term operations, and a strong focus on technical expertise, safety, and regulatory compliance.

Besides Trillium and Centrus Energy, smaller developers are also contributing to the region's workforce demand. For example, Hecate Energy LLC anticipates hiring 89 workers during its construction phase, including 47 positions in construction and extraction, 14 in management, and 11 in business and financial operations, among others, with annual salaries ranging from \$44,000 to over \$118,000. In the operation and maintenance phase, Hecate anticipates hiring 16 workers, including 4 in maintenance, 3 in management, and 3 in production, with a few additional positions in business, office, and technical support.

3 Training Capacity, Gaps, and Worker Readiness

The workforce demand during the construction phase of the PORTS site redevelopment is overwhelmingly concentrated in the skilled trades. Most of the projected jobs—such as electricians, pipefitters, welders, equipment operators, and construction laborers—require trade-specific technical training and certifications. Fortunately, the region has the training capacity needed to meet the workforce demand for the construction phase of the PORT redevelopment. Union-affiliated training centers across southern Ohio offer programs closely aligned with the expected growing occupations, positioning the local workforce to take full advantage of emerging opportunities at the PORTS site (see Table 2).

As stated previously, we identified 14 occupations in the region that are projected to decline significantly by 2032. The majority of these roles are service-related occupations, such as cashiers, home health aides, janitors, and administrative assistants, which are characterized by low wages, limited credentialing, and minimal upward mobility (Table 1). According to the skillshed analysis, workers currently employed in the declining skilled trades, such as maintenance and repair workers, are more likely to transition successfully into growing skilled trade occupations due to transferable competencies and similar training requirements. In contrast, service-sector workers face greater barriers to entry, as their skills are less aligned with the requirements of high-demand technical roles.

To support the workforce needs of the PORTS redevelopment, regional training centers should focus on two key populations. The first population is skilled trade workers, who are em-

employed in declining skilled trade occupations such as maintenance and repair workers. These individuals already have technical foundations that make them strong candidates for short-term upskilling or lateral movement into high-demand roles like welding, pipefitting, and equipment operation. Training centers can enhance their existing competencies by offering targeted pro-grams that accelerate their transition into new job opportunities.

The second group includes workers from the service sector—such as cashiers, home health aides, and janitors, who face both significant projected job decline and greater barriers to entering skilled trades. These occupations are highly concentrated in the region, meaning a large share of the local workforce is employed in roles that are disappearing. Unlike workers in the skilled trades, service-sector workers often have limited transferable skills and face difficulty finding future employment. These workers often lack the technical credentials or experience required for direct transition to the new in-demand occupations. Without targeted support, they are at high risk of long-term unemployment. Training centers should focus on developing accessible, entry-level pathways for this population, and also actively recruit them into programs that offer more stable and higher-paying careers.

While the region has a strong training infrastructure for many skilled trades, notable gaps exist in training pathways for higher-level managers, engineers, and specialists, such as civil engineers, industrial engineers, environmental engineers and specialists, health and safety specialists, supervisors, and construction managers (Tables 2 and 3). These positions are crucial for the long-term operation of the site. However, they typically require college degrees or advanced certifications that training centers do not offer. Stronger collaboration with regional colleges and universities is required to create educational pathways for these positions and fill this gap.

In the construction phase, some essential trades, such as construction managers, telecommunications equipment installers, and security and fire alarm installers, are currently not supported by local union training centers that were surveyed. These gaps may require new programs or partnerships to ensure roles can be filled locally.

Table 1: Declining Occupations in the OVRDC Region (2022–2032)

Occupation Code	Occupation Title	Occupational Cluster
43-5071.00	Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks	Engineers, Technicians, and Specialists
53-7064.00	Packers and Packagers, Hand	Engineers, Technicians, and Specialists
53-7061.00	Cleaners of Vehicles and Equipment	Skilled Trade Workers
49-9071.00	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	Skilled Trade Workers
41-2011.00	Cashiers	Managers, Teachers, and Service Related Workers
31-1121.00	Home Health Aides	Managers, Teachers, and Service Related Workers

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Occupation Code	Occupation Title	Employment Change
43-6014.00	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	Managers, Teachers, and Service Related Workers
25-2021.00	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	Managers, Teachers, and Service Related Workers
43-4051.00	Customer Service Representatives	Managers, Teachers, and Service Related Workers
49-3023.00	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	Managers, Teachers, and Service Related Workers
37-2011.00	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	Managers, Teachers, and Service Related Workers
35-3031.00	Waiters and Waitresses	Managers, Teachers, and Service Related Workers
53-7065.00	Stockers and Order Fillers	Managers, Teachers, and Service Related Workers
25-9042.00	Teaching Assistants, Preschool, Elementary, Middle, and Secondary School, Except Special Education	Managers, Teachers, and Service Related Workers

Table 2: Construction Phase Workforce Demand (Identified by Developers)

Occupation Code	Occupation Title	Labor Organizations Training Centers Support
11-3012.00	Administrative Services Managers	Not supported
47-2021.00	Brickmasons and Blockmasons	Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers Local 23 JATC* (Batavia), Ohio Laborers Training Center
47-2051.00	Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers	Operative Plasterers and Cement Masons JATC* (Ironton), Ohio Laborers Training Center
17-2051.00	Civil Engineers	Not supported
11-9021.00	Construction Managers	Not directly supported
15-1242.00	Database Administrators	Not supported
47-2081.00	Drywall and Ceiling Tile Installers	Indiana/Kentucky/Ohio Regional Council of Carpenters (Grayson Campus)
47-2111.00	Electricians	Electrical Training Academy (Portsmouth)
47-4031.00	Fence Erectors	Indiana/Kentucky/Ohio Regional Council of Carpenters (Grayson Campus), Ohio Laborers Training Center
47-2121.00	Glaziers	International Union of Painters and Allied Trades Finishing Trades Institute*, Ohio Region
49-9021.00	Heating, A/C, and Refrigeration Mechanics	Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 577 JATC*
47-3013.00	Helpers—Electricians	Electrical Training Academy (Portsmouth)
49-9098.00	Helpers—Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers	Ohio Laborers Training Center
		Plumbers and Pipefitters Local

47-3015.00	Helpers—Pipelayers, Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	577 JATC (Portsmouth)
47-2131.00	Insulation Workers, Floor, Ceiling, and Wall	International Association of Heat Frost Insulators and Allied Workers, Local 80* (Charleston), Ohio Laborers Training Center
47-2132.00	Insulation Workers, Mechanical	International Association of Heat Frost Insulators and Allied Workers, Local 80* (Charleston)

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Occupation Code	Occupation Title	Labor Organizations Training Centers Support
49-9044.00	Millwrights	Indiana/Kentucky/Ohio Regional Council of Carpenters (Grayson Campus)
19-4051.00	Nuclear Technicians	Appalachian Career Empowerment (ACE) (Piketon)
47-2073.00	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	Ohio Operating Engineers Apprenticeships and Training Center (Logan)
47-2141.00	Painters, Construction and Maintenance	International Union of Painters and Allied Trades Finishing Trades Institute* Ohio Region, Ohio Laborers Training Center
47-2152.00	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 577 JATC (Portsmouth)
29-2034.00	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	Appalachian Career Empowerment (ACE) (Piketon)
49-9096.00	Riggers	Boilermakers Local 105 (Piketon), Iron Workers Local 172 JATC (Columbus), Ohio Laborers Training Center
47-2181.00	Roofers	Roofers and Waterproofers JATC*, Ohio Laborers Training Center
49-2098.00	Security and Fire Alarm Systems Installers	Electrical Training Academy (Portsmouth)
33-9032.00	Security Guards	Not supported
47-2211.00	Sheet Metal Workers	Sheet Metal Workers Local 24*
47-2221.00	Structural Iron and Steel Workers	Iron Workers Local 172 JATC (Columbus)
49-2022.00	Telecommunications Equipment Installers	Not supported
51-4121.00	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	Ohio Operating Engineers Apprenticeship and Training Center (Logan), Boilermakers Local 105 (Piketon), Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 577 JATC (Portsmouth)

Table 3: Operation Phase Workforce Demand (Identified by Developers)

Occupation Code	Occupation Title	Labor Organizations Training Centers Support
13-2011.00	Accountants and Auditors	Not supported
51-9011.00	Chemical Equipment Operators and Tenders	Appalachian Career Empowerment (ACE) (Piketon)
19-4031.00	Chemical Technicians	Appalachian Career Empowerment (ACE) (Piketon)
13-1041.00	Compliance Officers	Not supported
15-1231.00	Computer Network Support Specialists	Not supported
47-2111.00	Electricians	Electrical Training Academy (Portsmouth), Appalachian Career Empowerment (Piketon)
17-2081.00	Environmental Engineers	Not supported

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Occupation Code	Occupation Title	Labor Organizations Training Centers Support
19-2041.00	Environmental Scientists and Specialists, Including Health	Not supported
49-1011.00	First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	Not directly supported
43-1011.00	First-line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	Not supported
33-1012.00	First-Line Supervisors of Police and Detectives	Not supported
51-1011.00	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	Not directly supported
11-1021.00	General and Operations Managers	Not directly supported
17-2112.00	Industrial Engineers	Not supported
49-9041.00	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	Indiana/Kentucky/Ohio Regional Council of Carpenters (Grayson Campus)
51-9061.00	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	Not supported
51-8011.00	Nuclear Power Reactor Operators	Appalachian Career Empowerment (ACE) (Piketon)
29-9011.00	Occupational Health and Safety Specialists	Not supported
29-9012.00	Occupational Health and Safety Technicians	Not supported
51-8013.00	Power Plant Operators	Appalachian Career Empowerment (ACE) (Piketon)
11-3061.00	Purchasing Managers	Not supported
33-9032.00	Security Guards	Not supported
13-1151.00	Training and Development Specialists	Not supported

References

IMPLAN® Model (2022). IMPLAN System (data and software). 2022 Data, using inputs provided by the user and IMPLAN Group LLC. Accessed: 2025-02-25. <https://www.implan.com>.

*Indicates the entity was not part of the initial survey