



BUSINESSFIRST!

for a greater dayton region

APRIL 2026



May Outreach Specialist Meeting

Learn more about the resources and impact of agribusiness on our communities at 9:30am on Thursday, May 21 at the Preble County Fairgrounds, 722 S. Franklin St., Eaton. If you missed it at the LEDO meeting, Justin Sommer will kick things off with an update on some great Preble County projects.

You will also hear about how they pitched to get the Ohio Quarter Horse Association to locate their events at the Fairgrounds and the economic impact that has on Eaton which may help you bring new resources to your community. If you weren't aware, the OSU Extension Agency and 4-H program has workforce development applications which could be applicable.

We will also ask the jurisdictions to vote on Farmersville's request to rejoin BusinessFirst!

It sounds like an intriguing program about resources that could apply to your businesses. Look for more information soon!



The Everyday Entrepreneur - Pitch Competition

April 17 - Application Deadline
June 2 - Pitch Day
Entrepreneur's Center, Dayton

Do you have a clear vision for your business but need the capital to take the next leap? The **Everyday Entrepreneur Pitch Competition** provides small business owners in our service area with the opportunity to compete for a **\$5,000 grand prize**, professional mentorship, and a clear path to accelerated growth.

EVENT INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION

The Ohio Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Program is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration. The SBDC program is also funded in part by the Ohio Development Services Agency. All services are extended to the public on a non-discriminatory basis. Language assistance services are available for limited English proficient individuals. Reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities will be made if requested at least two weeks in advance. Contact the Miami Valley SBDC at 937-210-9460.



Ohio Business Matchmaker 2026

April 22 & 23, 2026
The Nutter Center at Wright State University

For a more than 15 years, the Ohio Business Matchmaker has connected small



Dayton Daragons Networking Night at the Diamond Club

April 21, 2026; 7:05 pm
Day Air Ball Park

Please join us and enjoy a night of networking with other Chamber of Commerce members at Day Air Ballpark on **Tuesday, April 21, 2026**, as the Dragons take on the South Bend Cubs (Chicago Cubs affiliate).

The game will start at 7:05pm, with gates opening at 6:00 p.m. Tickets are **\$48 and will include your game ticket, a Dragons hat, non-alcoholic beverages, and a ballpark buffet**. A no-host bar will also be available for alcohol purchases.

We just opened our **new \$6M Diamond Club** event center in October, and our networking event will be held here – the nicest and newest place at Day Air Ballpark. See the following video for a preview: <https://youtu.be/WWzoP0BuM3Q>

Purchase tickets [HERE](#)



LaunchPad | April 23, 2026

April 23, 2026 - 9 am to 5 pm
The Hub at the Dayton Arcade

LaunchPad brings together the Dayton entrepreneurial community to learn, connect, and grow. It's where business takes off!

This free, community-focused event series is designed for entrepreneurs, small business owners, and creatives who want

businesses to government contracting opportunities.

As one of the largest business to government matchmaking events in the midwest, this event offers a unique opportunity for companies interested in doing business with the federal, state or local government to meet with representatives to market and sell their goods and services. This event is open to all businesses.

The event features one-on-one discussions with agencies and large prime contractors from local, state and federal organizations. It includes pre-scheduled matchmaking and a webinar series to prepare for the Matchmaker.

The Ohio Business Matchmaker allows businesses to either pre-schedule appointments or create their own unscheduled matchmaking the day of the event. For more information, email matchmaker@development.ohio.gov.

[EVENT INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION](#)

practical tools and meaningful connections. From January to July, each gathering offers expert-led sessions, panel discussions, and networking opportunities that deliver actionable insights you can put to work right away. Together, these events build momentum leading up to Launch Dayton Startup Week, taking place from September 15–17, 2026.

Guest Speakers

- Tracey Obenour, Design & Production Manager at Downtown Dayton Partnership (presenter, panalist)
- Jon Powell, Managing Partner at Christopher & Mae (presenter, panalist)
- Matt Meier, Owner & Creative Director at Ligature Creative (panalist)
- Megan Peters, Marketing & Community Partnerships Manager at Dayton Arcade (panel moderator)

Presentation Topics

- What Your Branding Is Saying: How branding shapes perception and creates clarity or confusion.
- Consistency Across Touchpoints: Align every customer interaction to reinforce your message and build trust.
- Your Website Is a Sales Tool: Improve your website by aligning SEO, content, and user experience.

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities

Spring Forward with the OOD Hiring Event at Wright State University

**April 28, 2026 - 9:30 am to 12 noon
Wright State University Student Union**

We are excited to invite you to participate in our **OOD Greater Dayton/Springfield In-Person Hiring Event and Job Fair 2026** which Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) will be hosting on **April 28, 2026, from 9:30 am until noon** (booth set-up/networking will start at 9:30 a.m.) at Wright State University's Student Union and there is **no cost** to participate!



MONTGOMERY C O U N T Y

Spring Job Fair

**May 6, 2026 - 12 am - 4 pm
Dayton Convention Center**

Connect with top employers and discover the career opportunities waiting for you at the Spring Job Fair!

You can also register your company and meet with dozens of skilled workers looking for employment.

There will also be a pre-scheduled interview component for same-day interviews for employers who can offer/decline/or move to the 2nd stage interview steps (pending background checks, etc.) our job seekers during that timeframe, so let us know if that is of interest as well.

Email cynthia.crews@ood.ohio.gov or use the link [Click Here](#) for registration confirmation ASAP!



2026 DDC Community Leader Fly-In

May 11 - 13, 2026
Washington, DC

Each year, local leaders visit Washington, D.C. to engage with federal officials, advocate for regional interests, promote economic development, and improve quality of life. The highlight is a Capitol Hill reception, offering networking with lawmakers and business leaders interested in Ohio.

The Dayton Region hosts one of the United States' most extensive and enduring community-wide programs, known as the Fly-In. This initiative, launched in 1984 by the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce, continues annually with the primary objective of bridging the gap between local interests and federal governance in Washington, D.C.

[EVENT INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION](#)

[EVENT FLYER](#)



Dayton Lightship Bootcamp

June 15-17, 2026

The DDC and JobsOhio, in partnership with the Lightship Foundation, will host Lightship Bootcamp, powered by JobsOhio, in Dayton, OH, June 15-17, 2026.

What is it?

Lightship Bootcamp is a FREE 2.5-day program that supports early-stage founders and their teams with mentorship, a specialized curriculum, and resources for entrepreneurial success. This immersive experience is designed to help you:

- Refine business strategy and marketing approaches
- Strengthen branding and design strategy • Receive expert legal advice relevant to your business
- Perfect your pitch and prepare for investment opportunities

What's included?

- Free hotel accommodations
- Meals and snacks
- A thoughtfully constructed, high-impact curriculum that includes: » Investment deck audit and revision » Pitch audit and revision consultation » Abbreviated financial audit » Legal guidance » Brand analysis and workshop » Customer insight report » Business model canvas » Product landing page review



Seeking Pitch Coaches for 10KSB!

Thursday June 30, 2026

You're Invited to be a Pitch Coach!

The Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program at Sinclair College is looking for volunteers to be pitch coaches on Thursday, July 30. During this module, scholars will create funding pitches related to their growth opportunity, and pitch coaches will provide guidance on refining the pitch.

Volunteer coaches will receive detailed briefings and instruction on their role. Anyone is welcome, even if you have no experience! The most important qualification is a desire to help small business owners grow. [Click this link to sign up](#), or reach out to [Val Beerbower](#) for more information.

Who should apply?

We encourage early-stage founders in Ohio to apply. Whether you're a first-time founder, a small business owner, or exploring a new venture, this program is for people actively working to turn ideas into sustainable businesses.

APPLICATION AND INFORMATION



ECDI Women's Business Centers of Ohio

The ECDI Women's Business Centers of Ohio (WBCs) are a program of nonprofit community lender, ECDI. In accordance with our mission, we are dedicated to supporting entrepreneurs by providing resources, training, and access to capital. The WBCs provide business planning, training and one-on-one assistance and mentorship to their members and ECDI loan clients.

Beyond education, the WBCs also serve as a vital support system for entrepreneurs, creating opportunities to connect with peers, build meaningful networks, and find community with others who understand the challenges of running a small business. We believe no one should have to go it alone, and together we can help one another grow, stay motivated, and reach our goals. Explore the wide range of services we offer entrepreneurs.

We serve entrepreneurs throughout Ohio region, with resource centers located in:

Central Ohio

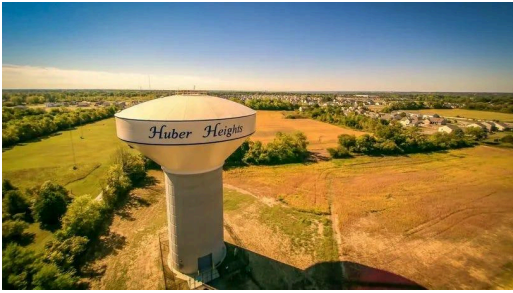
Central Appalachia - serving Southeastern Ohio and counties in Kentucky

Greater Cincinnati - serving the Greater Cincinnati Tri-State Area

Greater Dayton

Northern Ohio - serving Cleveland, Akron, Canton and Toledo

We are part of a network of over 140 U.S. Small Business Administration-funded Women's Business Centers throughout the country, and are the only such centers in the state of Ohio.



February Virtual Meeting Recap

On February 12th, BusinessFirst! held a Virtual Resource Meeting featuring representatives from The Miami Valley Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

The SBDC provides valuable free resources to local businesses at every stage of growth. Emerald Sparks presented an overview of the SBDC's and Lawrence Jones highlighted export assistance programs available to regional businesses.

SBDC's has confidential, no-cost counseling services delivered through certified business advisors who specialize in marketing, human resources, finance, and veteran-owned enterprises. Funded by the SBA, Ohio Department of Development, and the City of Dayton, these advisors assist for-profit startups and established businesses with goal setting, business planning, financial projections, and entity formation.

Lawrence Jones leads the Export Assistance Network, which helps businesses expand into international markets through three key programs:

- **International Market Support Program (IMS):** Free consulting, trade show assistance, and partner identification for companies entering new global markets.
- **Ohio Export Internship Program:** 12-week internships supporting export activities
- **International Market Access Grant:** Up to \$20,000 reimbursement for trade show travel, product testing, translation, and other export-related expenses (with a \$100,000 program year cap)

To learn more about their programs, visit www.sbdcec.com.

March Outreach Specialist Meeting Recap

The latest BusinessFirst! Outreach Specialist Meeting showcased the exciting transformation happening across our region!

Huber Heights is Booming

Jason Antonick shared an energizing update on Huber Heights' new era of growth. With a brand-new Governance Center, expanding housing developments, and a growing entertainment district, the momentum is unmistakable and it's not slowing down!

TID: Your Free Resource for Faster Projects

Vanessa Glotfelter from the Montgomery County Transportation Improvement District reminded economic developers that the TID is a powerful, no-cost resource. Thanks to special legislative powers, the TID bypasses lengthy procurement processes to deliver results quickly. From roundabouts and roadway reconstructions to park improvements and safety upgrades, their work makes communities safer and more accessible. Vanessa emphasized that safety-driven investments deliver the biggest impact for mid-sized communities, easing congestion and improving quality of life.

Port Authority: Your Financing Partner

Joe Geraghty from the Dayton Port Authority revealed how the Port powers regional development not with cargo ships, but with creative financing! The Port assembles capital, issues municipal bonds, leverages tax-exempt structures, and helps developers save through capital lease agreements. Their fingerprints are on major wins across the region: Dayton Airport projects, downtown housing, employers like

Cargill and Abbott, and numerous multifamily developments.

The takeaway? Our region has exceptional resources ready to help you succeed!



Created in 2001, the nationally recognized BusinessFirst! program uses a customer oriented approach to economic development that connects businesses to resources in the Dayton Region. We are the single-point of contact for all of your business needs. BusinessFirst! has provided assistance to over 7,800 businesses in the Greater Dayton Region - we are here to assist your company, too.

BusinessFirst! for a Greater Dayton Region
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If you have any information, events, job openings or articles that you would like featured in our newsletter, please let us know.

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