



OLDA Partnership Research Agenda

FY2026 – FY2027

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Introduction

The Ohio Longitudinal Data Archive (OLDA) Partnership is an administrative data partnership supporting research priorities of Ohio's public agencies that contribute data to the OLDA and their partner research organization, the Ohio Education Research Center (OERC). The goal of the OLDA Partnership is to inform government policy and program decisions, and to generate new research-based knowledge. This Research Agenda provides researchers, policymakers, program leaders, advocates, and Ohioans with insight into the high-priority research questions of the OLDA Partnership members.

This Research Agenda is intended to serve state policymakers and agency leaders seeking evidence to guide program and policy decisions, and researchers interested in using OLDA data to address high priority questions identified by OLDA member agencies. The OLDA Research Agenda provides transparency into shared analytic priorities and offers a framework for aligning proposed research projects with state needs.

Background

The OLDA contains administrative records from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (ODEW), the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE), the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD). The OLDA enables researchers and policymakers to analyze trends in education, employment, and program participation over time in order to assess the effectiveness of workforce, education, housing, and human service programs and to identify gaps and opportunities for improving outcomes across Ohio's education and workforce systems.

The OERC is a unit of John Glenn College of Public Affairs at The Ohio State University. The OERC conducts research through the Ohio Analytics partnership using administrative data in the OLDA. In addition to conducting research using the data available through the Ohio Analytics partnership, OERC research draws upon the expertise of its staff and an affiliated network of researchers to generate high-quality research products using a variety of methods and data sources, including case studies, environmental scans, literature reviews and survey research. The OERC partners with the Center for Human Resource Research (CHRR) at The Ohio State University to manage the OLDA,

including data governance, data processing, preparation of research extracts, and data use consulting services. CHRR is an interdisciplinary research center in OSU's College of Arts and Sciences, specializing in survey research, longitudinal data systems, mobile data collection methods, and data analytics.

Governance

The OLDA Partnership operates under a multi-tiered governance structure designed to ensure appropriate data stewardship, analytic rigor, and alignment with agency priorities. Full details are provided in the **OLDA Partnership Governance Manual**.

The Policy Council

The Policy Council is comprised of senior staff from the state agencies participating in the OLDA Partnership and has authority over the use of the data contained in the OLDA.

The Coordinating Board

The Coordinating Board oversees the routine daily operations of the OLDA in collaboration with the OLDA Partnership member agencies.

The Data Stewards Advisory Committee

The Data Stewards Advisory Committee is comprised of key technical staff from the state agencies participating in the OLDA Partnership and has oversight of the technical aspects on the use of the data housed in the OLDA.

OERC and CHRR Internal Governance Structure

Senior Management Team

The Senior Management Team is responsible for staffing coordination, project troubleshooting, and project deliverables. It meets once per month and is made up of senior staff members including the Associate Director of the OERC, the Research Scientist who manages OLDA data access procedures, and senior research staff with Principal Investigator status.

Data Team

The Data Team is coordinated by the Research Scientist in charge of OLDA at CHRR. They meet monthly to identify and solve problems with data documentation and access.

College Center Oversight Committee

The College Center Oversight Committee is appointed by the Dean of the John Glenn College of Public Affairs and is comprised of the Associate Dean of Faculty and Research, and members of Glenn College

faculty and Staff, at least 2/3 of which must be faculty. They meet in Spring to review OERC policy goals and any policy or governance changes and in Fall to review the OERC annual report.

How the Long-Term Agenda Informs Biennial Goals

The OLDA Research Agenda is grounded in a set of long-term strategic questions that guide biennial research planning and data access decisions. Beginning with founding investments from the State funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Workforce Data Quality Initiative in 2010 and the U.S. Department of Education's Race to the Top grant program in 2011, the OERC has leveraged the OLDA to provide support to state government on key areas as follows:

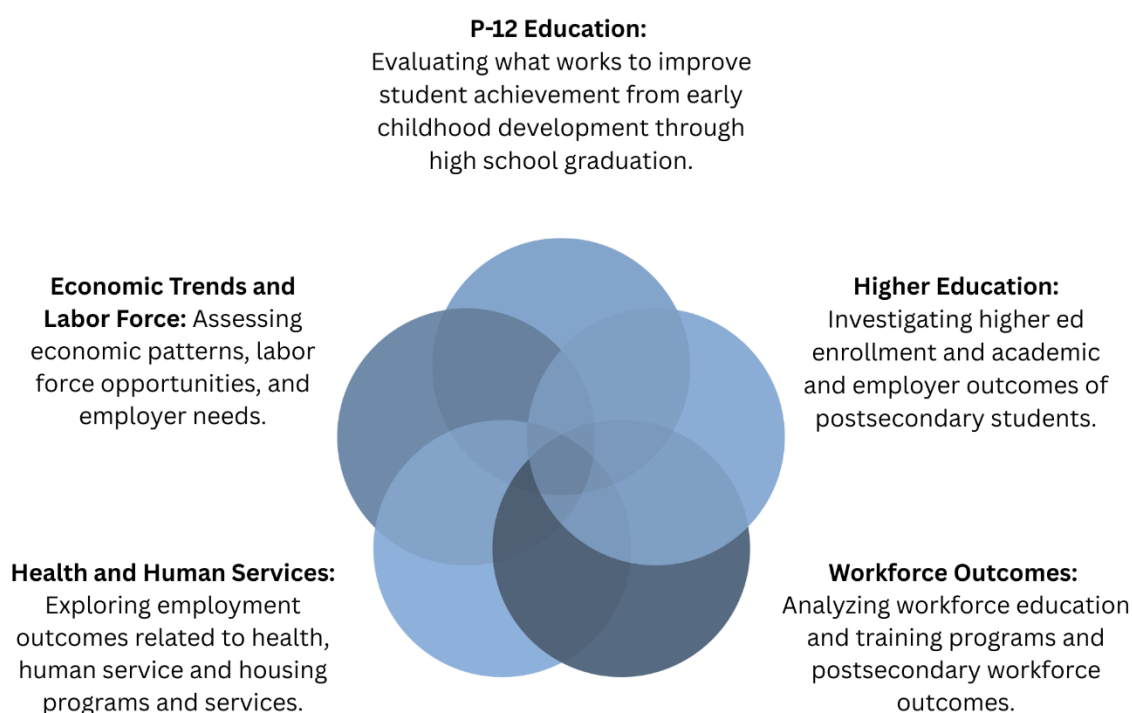
1. P-12 Education
2. Higher Education
3. Workforce Outcomes
4. Economic and Labor Force Trends, and
5. Housing, Human Services and Health

Collectively, these focus areas reflect a perspective that examines pathways from early learning through postsecondary education, workforce participation, housing stability, and long-term economic and social well-being.

These long-term areas of work are described in more detail in the **Ohio Education Research Center Strategic Plan for 2024-2029**. Practically speaking, these priorities inform any application to use the Ohio Longitudinal Data Archive, as detailed in the **OLDA Data Access Procedures**. Individuals who apply to access OLDA data for research, including staff at OERC and CHRR, are required to designate one or more areas of focus for any proposed project and submit the application for review and approval by the agencies whose data is being requested. While the long-term agenda is relatively stable, building upon the foundation of education and workforce linkages, it has shifted in recent years to include a wider array of housing, disability services, and family support questions. The long-term agenda is also supplemented by shorter-term questions that address immediate programmatic or policy needs of the State.

Research Priorities

Together, the five research agenda focus areas form an integrated framework—linking P–12 education, higher education, workforce outcomes, economic and labor market conditions, and health and human services—to generate actionable evidence that helps OLDA Partnership members align education, workforce, housing, and human service policies in ways that improve opportunity and well-being for all Ohioans. Research questions with active projects are indicated in *italics* in the priority list below.



P-12 Education: Evaluating what works to improve student achievement from early childhood development through high school graduation.

- *What are the education, training, employment, and earnings outcomes of Ohio's high school graduates?*
- *What are the characteristics of the current principal workforce in Ohio's schools, and what are the pathways to the principalship?*

- What are the predictors of success after high school graduation?
- Which schools and districts are “positive outliers” in terms of academic achievement, literacy, and post-graduation success?
- What are the factors that contribute to success in literacy in the early grades?
- How does literacy affect later school success?
- What are the patterns of attendance in schools and districts in Ohio and how have they changed since Covid?

Higher Education: Investigating higher education enrollment and academic and employment outcomes of postsecondary students.

- *What are the employment patterns of graduates from Ohio’s public postsecondary institutions?*
- *In which industries do Ohio postsecondary graduates become employed after earning their credential or degree?*
- *What do Ohio postsecondary graduates earn after earning their credential or degree, and how does that change over time?*
- *What are the outcomes of programs designed to attract and retain students and graduates in specific fields (e.g. Choose Ohio First)?*
- *What are the outcomes of programs designed to support students with demonstrated financial need (e.g. Ohio College Opportunity Grant)?*
- What are factors that contribute to maximizing students’ labor market outcomes and return on investment?

Workforce Outcomes: Evaluating the effectiveness of workforce education, training programs, and postsecondary pathways in improving employment and earnings outcomes.

- *What are the employment, earnings and continuing education/training outcomes of Ohio’s public workforce development programs?*
- *How effective are job assistance and training programs (i.e., RESEA) in improving participants’ labor market outcomes?*
- What are the employment and earnings outcomes of industry-specific initiatives such as Good Jobs Challenge and QUEST training programs?
- How does short term training like TechCred improve individual earnings?

Health and Human Services: Exploring employment outcomes related to health, human services, and housing programs and services.

- a. **Housing:** Exploring affordable housing support and services related to stability, safety, and wellbeing.
 - i. *What are the employment and earnings patterns over time of Homeowner Assistance Fund applicants?*
 - ii. *What are the employment and earnings effects of mortgage payment subsidies for unemployed homeowners?*
 - iii. What policy and programmatic solutions are most effective at expanding the availability of accessible and affordable housing throughout the state?
 - iv. To what extent do innovative housing solutions improve outcomes for vulnerable Ohioans?
- b. **Individuals with Disabilities:** Exploring support and services related to independent living and security for individuals with disabilities.
 - i. *What are the employment, earnings and continuing education/training outcomes of adults and youth receiving vocational rehabilitation services?*
 - ii. What are the education, employment, and cross-program use experiences of youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities?

Economic Trends and Labor Force: Assessing economic patterns, labor force opportunities, and employer needs to provide employers with access to the talent they need.

- *What is the available workforce supply for high-demand fields in Ohio, and how does it vary by region?*
- *What are the projected job openings and growth by occupation in Ohio, and how does that vary by region?*
- *To what extent is there a gap between Ohio's workforce supply and employer demand in priority industry sectors?*
- *What are the trends among those who file Unemployment Insurance claims in Ohio? Do the trends reveal disparities or inequity in the UI system?*
- What is the projected population of Employment First Transition youth?

Research Process and Short-Term Projects

Most agencies have needs that come up quickly and that fall outside the planned biennial OLDA agreement among the OLDA Partnership and the OERC. These needs are derived both by new opportunities, such as new funding, or to meet emerging conditions such as those seen during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our process for funding these differs from agency to agency depending on OLDA agreement, supplementary agreements, and staff resources. The OERC typically make every effort to fulfill the request, as the funding agreement between the OERC and the OLDA Partnership includes time to address on-demand efforts. Saying yes to these requests is easier if the data are in the OLDA already, agencies can identify a subject matter expert to assist and guide research, and the necessary methods are well tested.

The OERC has data sharing agreements with and derives funding in part from:

- The Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services
- The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce
- The Ohio Department of Higher Education
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities
- The Ohio Housing Finance Agency
- The Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation

The OERC practices management of its research and data by:

- **Coordinating** internal and external research requests.
 - The OERC reviews proposals and results for compliance with state and federal rules.
 - The OERC develops, revises, and maintains data access documentation (e.g., application forms, project tracking system, project status reports as needed).
- **Onboarding** new agencies and educating new agency contacts.
- **Supporting** data management.
 - The OERC generates new variables and other data enhancements to standardize repeated tasks and improve usability and efficiency in analytic and research activities.
 - The OERC masks sensitive fields by:

- Assigning and maintaining pseudo identifiers (conducting probabilistic matching where necessary).
- Initiating methods to maximize the efficiency of data use by creating variables and/or documentation.
- **Managing** OLDA data permissions.
 - The OERC ensures that data permissions follow established OLDA data access procedures detailed in the OLDA Data Sharing agreement.
 - The OERC complies with statutes in the State Information Security, Privacy and Data Handling Requirements.
 - The OERC conducts data quality control checks.
 - The OERC interprets and translates data definitions and data collection processes to guide transformations and usability enhancements that include cataloging data and documenting data content and structure over time and across datasets.

Themes of research include employment trends, business and labor, evidence-based decision making, technology and artificial intelligence, achievement, and equity, and education.

Closing

The OLDA Partnership Research Agenda articulates a shared vision for using administrative data to support evidence-based policymaking across Ohio’s education, workforce, housing, and human service systems. By aligning agency priorities, data stewardship, and applied research, the OLDA Partnership promotes high-quality analysis that responds to both long-term strategic goals and emerging policy needs. This Agenda will be revisited periodically to reflect new data assets, evolving state priorities, and opportunities for innovation.