

## OHIO BUSINESS GROWTH GUIDE

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# JobsOhio launches strategy to position state as hub for AI innovation



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Ohio's AI Super Sector strategy aims to prove that the future of AI innovation isn't limited to research labs.

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Mar 23, 2026

Ohio has a rich history as a hub of American innovation. It's where the Wright brothers designed their airplane, Charles Kettering transformed automobiles with the first electric self-starter and Powel Crosley Jr. brought radios to the masses.

As the world enters the age of artificial intelligence, Ohio is well-positioned to continue its tradition of pioneering new frontiers, according to economic development officials.

"When I was a child, I used to read comic books in which we would have flying taxis and almost every page would show a glimpse of AI," said Payal Thakur, managing director of data analytics and AI for JobsOhio.

Now that fantasy is becoming reality, as Ohio is a [key manufacturing hub](#) for Joby Aviation, a company that builds electric air taxis. At the same time, JobsOhio is focusing on what it calls Ohio's AI Super Sector. By leveraging the state's economic strengths, the super sector presents Ohio as a go-to place for businesses deploying AI in virtually any industry.

"We almost have an unfair advantage in Ohio to be able to do all of that," Thakur said.

### **AI Super Sector strategy**

As the state's private, nonprofit economic development corporation, JobsOhio focuses its work on five super sectors it identified as having growth opportunities valued in the trillions of dollars: semiconductors and microelectronics, advanced air mobility, life sciences and energy and AI. AI was a natural addition because it accelerates growth across those existing sectors, Thakur said. The organization also continues to drive business and job growth in priority industries.

"AI is an opportunity for all of us to understand the advantages, with guardrails, and take Ohio to that next level," she said. "We've always been in the front and center of innovation. AI is a great opportunity where we can do that again, whether that is smart manufacturing, innovation, world-class structures or an AI-capable workforce."

Ohio is already home to industry leaders implementing AI in transformative ways. For example:

- In health care, Cleveland Clinic and other hospital systems are deploying AI for diagnostics, treatment planning, drug discovery and personalized medicine.
- Manufacturing companies such as Anduril Industries are [establishing advanced manufacturing facilities](#) in Ohio that are leading the development of autonomous systems.
- Logistics companies such as FedEx, Amazon and DHL have major hubs in Ohio, where they use AI to optimize routing, warehouse automation and inventory management.

## Building the AI workforce pipeline

Ohio is expanding the strength of its science, technology, engineering and math talent pool. Ohio has more than 600,000 STEM professionals and emerging talent. The state also recently achieved its first net positive domestic in-migration in more than 10 years.

“The people who are migrating are not just coming for high-tech jobs in AI or other industries,” Thakur said. “They’re coming for the quality of life that Ohio offers. We also have the sixth most diverse economy where we allow professionals to pivot between industries and grow.”

A key part of its effort involves supporting the growth of the state’s already strong AI talent base. JobsOhio and the Enterprise Technology Association, for example, recently launched the [AI-Ready Ohio pilot](#) to accelerate statewide AI adoption and workforce development. JobsOhio also offers grants for employee training, support for AI certifications and talent acquisition services to businesses.

These efforts support what Thakur calls transformational upskilling.

“Historically, transformation has been our keystone in any generation,” she said. “Technology doesn’t necessarily eliminate work; it transforms and upgrades it. AI is creating a new wave of jobs. It’s reshaping and improving our quality of life.”

The Ohio State University also is working to incorporate AI into its programs. In September, the university [launched the AI\(X\) Hub](#), an effort to accelerate AI tools and capabilities for researchers across 15 colleges. In addition, the university requires all students, starting with the class of 2029, to [study generative AI basics](#) as part of their general education launch seminar and participate in GenAI workshops as part of their first year success series. Students also will have access to other AI workshops and courses.

## Ohio's AI infrastructure and other advantages

As more companies integrate AI into their operations, the right computing power and data infrastructure are critical. Ohio already has attracted significant investments from the largest technology companies, including [Amazon](#), Google and [Meta](#), as well as hyperscale cloud providers and data center operators. Recent announcements include [SoftBank's \\$3 billion investment](#) in an OpenAI data center facility near Cleveland and Vultr's \$1 billion investment in a [data center](#) in Springfield.

The data center supply chain is also creating thousands of jobs in Ohio. Companies like SoftBank, Vertiv, Eaton, LayerZero and Maristar Technologies represent billions in investment and thousands of high-paying positions manufacturing equipment and providing services to data centers globally.

Semiconductor and microelectronics development is also critical to AI infrastructure, Thakur said. Intel's \$28 billion [investment in Ohio](#), combined with IBM and the University of Dayton's [joint research collaboration](#) for next-generation semiconductor technologies, positions Ohio at the forefront of the chips and computing power required for AI advancement, Thakur said.

Ohio's AI Super Sector strategy aims to prove that the future of AI innovation isn't limited to research labs, Thakur said. It will happen on the factory floor, in hospital wards, on the roads and in the sky.

In addition to its innovation ecosystem, Ohio has cost and speed advantages, she said. The state has no state corporate income tax and the second-lowest cost of doing business, [according to CNBC](#). This frees up capital for research, development and deployment.

JobsOhio's private structure and funding from the profits of the JobsOhio Beverage System mean the organization can move quickly to provide support and incentives for business growth. In addition to attracting new business to the state, JobsOhio has 2,000 to 3,000 conversations each year with existing businesses to retain or expand jobs in Ohio.

"It's a pivotal historical change that we're making by bringing companies from all over the world to Ohio," Thakur said. "It's going to take time, but it's the right time. We are investing in our future."

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