



Oberlin College: In and for Ohio

COMMUNITY IMPACT FROM MAIN STREET TO THE STATEHOUSE

Since 1833, Oberlin College and Conservatory has grown up alongside the city of Oberlin. Today, the college is a major economic engine and a critical partner serving local schools, nonprofits, employers, and public agencies.

A Lightcast economic impact study found that in 2023-24, Oberlin added \$283 million to the Northeast Ohio

economy and supported nearly 3,300 jobs across the region. That impact comes from more than payroll and construction. It comes from students, faculty, staff, and alumni working shoulder-to-shoulder with community partners to strengthen learning in pre-K-12 classrooms, expand a talented workforce, and serve neighbors.

This document highlights four concrete examples of Oberlin's impact—one each in the city of Oberlin, Lorain County, Northeast Ohio, and the state of Ohio—that illustrate the bipartisan values of work, service, practicality, and results.

City of Oberlin

Tutoring, mentoring, and a stronger pre-K through 12 pipeline

Oberlin's first responsibility is to its hometown. Through community-based learning courses and the Bonner Center—Oberlin's hub for community engagement—more than 70 Oberlin students work each year in Oberlin City Schools classrooms, from preschool through high school. They tutor in math and reading, mentor students exploring college and the trades, and support programs at the Boys & Girls Club and other youth-serving organizations.

Faculty treat local partners as co-educators. Course assignments are built around what schools say they need—lesson support, one-on-one tutoring, or help



with data and program design. For Oberlin students, this is not extra volunteering; it is serious academic work tied to tangible outcomes for local kids.

Our students also help high school seniors complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and explore postsecondary options such as college, joint vocational programs, and direct entry into skilled trades. Oberlin City Schools recently earned a five-star rating in postsecondary readiness, and local partners credit strong community support—including Oberlin's tutors and mentors—as part of that success.

This is Oberlin's mission on the ground: using a nationally recognized education to help local children build the futures they want.

Lorain County

Supporting families, adult learners, and first responders

Across Lorain County, Oberlin partners with organizations that strengthen families and the local workforce. Examples include:

- **Oberlin Community Services & Second Harvest Food Bank:** Students help operate a pantry, provide community meals, and help with wraparound supports that keep families stable enough to work and plan for the future.
- **LCCC EMT Certification Pipeline:** Through a partnership with Lorain County Community College, students preparing for health careers earn EMT certification through a winter-term program delivered at LCCC's Ridge campus. The partnership helps address regional shortages in emergency medical technicians.
- **El Centro (Lorain):** Students support English language learning, GED preparation, and citizenship classes. On Saturdays, Oberlin students sit beside adults who are preparing for better jobs, legal status, and college for their children.

Oberlin is also an active member of the Lorain County Chamber of Commerce, helping to lead collaborations in education, economic mobility, and energy. These partnerships build technical and professional skills while adding capacity that community organizations could not otherwise afford. The result is a stronger Lorain County—and a better-prepared local workforce.

Oberlin Athletics and Community Engagement

Oberlin athletics strengthens students, energizes campus life, and anchors the community. The college's 21 varsity programs in the North Coast Athletic Conference emphasize academic excellence, leadership, service, and competition—values that shape students.

Student-athletes contribute thousands of service hours each year through the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), earning national recognition such as the NCAA Division III NADIII Community Service Award. Their efforts range from "Helping Hands" holiday gift drives and One Love Foundation violence-prevention programs to fundraisers supporting local health and social initiatives.

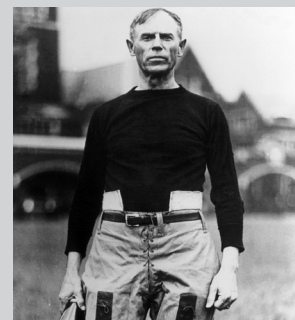
A hallmark of this engagement is the long-running "Track or Treat," where every varsity team hosts activity stations for hundreds of local children and families. Programs like "Play Like a Girl," a free multi-sport clinic for girls ages 5-12, introduce youth to athletics, build confidence, and provide strong role models. Athletes also mentor in local schools, volunteer with Oberlin Community Services, and support projects through the Bonner Center.

These experiences cultivate enduring habits of leadership and service—contributions that Oberlin student-athletes carry into communities across Ohio and the nation, strengthening the places where they live, work, and lead.

Heisman Heritage

Long before the Heisman Trophy became college football's most famous award, its namesake coach got his start on Oberlin's sidelines. John W. Heisman's first head coaching job was at Oberlin in 1892, and he returned again in 1894. His 1892 team was considered undefeated and beat Ohio State twice while claiming a famously disputed win over Michigan.

Today, the Heisman Club—named in his honor—continues that tradition by supporting Oberlin's student-athletes and athletic facilities across all sports.





Northeast Ohio

A talent engine for Cleveland's workforce and adult education systems

Oberlin is helping address one of Northeast Ohio's most persistent challenges: attracting, developing, and retaining talent across the region. The Cleveland metropolitan area lost roughly 10% of its population in the half-century between 1970 and 2020. Through career exploration and partnership programs, Oberlin links students to internships, micro-internships, and full-time roles with regional employers.

A key contribution is Oberlin's expanding partnership with the **Educational Service Center (ESC) of Northeast Ohio's Adult Education Providers Network**—a coalition of more than a dozen organizations working to match adult learners with in-demand jobs, training pathways, and employer needs.

- **Oberlin's Data Analysis Tool for Adult Workforce Providers:** An Oberlin student intern is designing a sophisticated data tool for the network to help providers and adult learners understand:
 - What skills employers need most,
 - Which training programs exist and where the gaps lie,

- How adult learners move through workforce programs, and
- How to align training with real-time market demand.

This work is strengthening Northeast Ohio's ability to respond quickly to labor market needs—something that resonates strongly with employers, public agencies, and taxpayers looking for practical, results-driven solutions.

- **Park Arts:** A new arts and education campus is being developed on the historic Park Synagogue site in Cleveland Heights, in partnership with Oberlin College and Conservatory. The initiative preserves an iconic landmark while creating studios, performance spaces, housing, and public green space.
- **Cleveland Talent Alliance & Global Cleveland:** Collaborations focus on keeping Oberlin graduates in the region through micro-internships, job portals, and talent placement pipelines.
- **Summer on the Cuyahoga:** Provides paid internships at Cleveland-area businesses and nonprofits, often leading to repeat placements or full-time roles.



- **City of Cleveland and Cleveland-area nonprofits:** Students work with American Scores, Second Harvest, Urban Solidarity Farms, and similar organizations—learning logistics, youth development, and operational skills.
- **Cleveland’s Growing Sports and Civic Economy:** A new sport and management concentration integrates academic study with experiential learning—including partnerships with the Greater Cleveland Sports Commission, Cleveland’s new pro soccer organization, and the community impact arm of the Cleveland Cavaliers.
- **Hope Center and Seeds of Literacy:** This direct service and adult education organization provides support to those in greatest need.

All of this builds on a strong foundation: Oberlin’s operations, construction, students, alumni, and visitors add \$283.1 million to the Northeast Ohio economy and support 3,271 jobs. Furthermore, Oberlin actively engages in regional economic development and community groups, including the Greater Cleveland Partnership and Global Cleveland.



State of Ohio

High returns for taxpayers—without state operating funds

Oberlin does not receive state or local operating funds, but Ohio taxpayers still benefit substantially. The Lightcast study indicates Ohio taxpayers gain \$26.7 million annually from Oberlin through:

- Higher earnings and business output that generate additional tax revenue.
- Reduced use of public services by college-educated workers.

Oberlin students help adult learners navigate training, develop resumes, practice interviews, and move into in-demand jobs.

- **EMT and Pre-Health Pipelines:** The EMT program with LCCC directly addresses statewide shortages in emergency services personnel.
- **Community-Based Learning Courses:** More than 51 courses connect Oberlin students with Ohio schools, nonprofits, and public agencies to complete real projects that build community capacity.

For employers and taxpayers, these programs strengthen Ohio’s workforce. For students, they provide a pathway to civic responsibility, hands-on experience, and meaningful careers in Ohio.