



Member Survey Report

December 12, 2024

Draft 6.0

1. Introduction

The Ohio Economic Development Association (OEDA) launched its first annual member survey on Friday, November 15, 2024, closing it on December 12, 2024. This comprehensive 25-question survey is designed to gather valuable insights to inform strategic planning, measure organizational performance, and guide programming for the upcoming year. The average completion time was 21 minutes.

2. Survey Response & Demographics

2.1 Response Rate

- The 2025 OEDA Member Survey achieved a 45% response rate (267 responses from approximately 600 members).
- This significantly exceeds typical survey benchmarks of 10-30%.
- This strong response rate provides reliable data for strategic planning and indicates high member engagement.

2.2 Profile of Respondents

Organization & Geography

The answers were derived from Q1 (Contact Information). Percentages for these items do not include 54 entries which provided no contact information.

- **Organization Type:** Local Economic Development Organization (LEDO) (48%), Regional Economic Development Organization (REDO) (20%), State (14%), Other (18%).
- **Geography:** NE (19%), NW (18%), SW (18%), SE (8%), C (11%), W (12%), E (2%), Statewide (18%).

Experience Level

- Q2: “How many years have you worked in the field of economic development?”
- <1 yr (5%), 1-3 yrs (21%), 4-7 yrs (21%), 8-12 yrs (16%), 13-20 yrs (21%), >20 yrs (16%).

Service Area

- Q3: “What is the population of the community or region you serve?”
- <25k (12%), 25-200k (34%), 200-500k (10%), >500k (44%).

Community Type

- Q4: “How would you best classify the area in which you primarily work or serve?”
- Urban (10%), Suburban (19%), Rural (22%), Regional (28%), State (11%), Other (9%).

3. Member Satisfaction

3.1 Net Promoter Score

Calculation based on Q6: “On a scale from 0 to 10, how likely are you to recommend OEDA membership to a friend or colleague?”

- Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a widely used metric that measures customer loyalty and satisfaction by asking people how likely they are to recommend something to others, resulting in a score that can range from highly negative to highly positive.
- Our Net Promoter Score: 45 (Good range: 30-50).

NPS Comments

Q7: “Reason for Recommendation: Please explain your rating.”

238 responses (89% of total responses)

- Networking Opportunities (70 mentions): Repeatedly cited as a benefit. Particularly valuable for connecting ED professionals across Ohio. Especially important for early-career professionals.
- Education/Professional Development (65 mentions): OEDI courses, certification courses, Basic frequently mentioned as valuable. Membership looking for professional development opportunities and training programs.
- Quality of Information/Resources (45 mentions): Updates on state programs and incentives. Legislative updates. Current Industry trends. News sharing.
- Value Based on Career Stage (30 mentions): Particularly valuable for newcomers to the field. Some experienced professionals find it repetitive. Need for mid-career content noted.
- Annual Summit (25 mentions): Generally positive feedback. Valued networking opportunity. Quality of content varies by year. Recent Summit in Toledo gets positive mentions.
- New Leadership (20 mentions): Positive sentiment about new direction. Optimism about future changes. Renewed vision noted.
- Areas for Improvement (15 mentions): Desire for more frequent webinars. Need for more diverse content. Some find trainings stagnant. Request for more engagement between major events.

3.2 Additional Satisfaction Ratings (out of 5.0)

Q5: “Overall Satisfaction: Overall, how satisfied are you with your OEDA membership?”

Q8: “Membership Area Satisfaction: Please rate your satisfaction with the following areas of your OEDA membership.” (1 = Very Dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Satisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied)

Overall	4.1
Education	4.2
Events	4.2
Information	4.1
Advocacy	3.7

4. General Feedback & Recommendations

4.1 Programs To Continue

Q14: “What initiatives or programs should OEDA keep doing (that it's currently doing)?”

143 responses (54%)

- Training & Education Programs (60 mentions): Basic. Core Courses. OEDI Certification. General education/training.
- Annual Summit (40 mentions): Consistently rated as valuable. Appreciation for moving location around state. Networking opportunities. Quality of content.

- OEDA Express Newsletter (15 mentions): Recent addition receiving positive feedback. Valued for content quality. Appreciated for regular updates. “Must read” status for many.
- Professional Certification (15 mentions): OhioCED program. Certification courses. Professional development track. Value for career advancement.
- Legislative Updates (12 mentions): Policy information. Advocacy updates. Legislative tracking. Government affairs.
- Current Communications (10 mentions): Job postings. Email updates. Regular communications. News sharing.
- Other topic receiving under ten mentions: Specific programs (8 mentions).

4.2 Programs to Stop

Q15: “What initiatives or programs should OEDA stop doing (that it's currently doing)?”

82 responses (31%). Top topics/themes ranked by number of mentions are as follows:

- None/NA (50+ mentions): Majority indicated “none,” “N/A,” or similar responses.
- Other topics receiving under ten mentions: Basic Course Issues (4 mentions); Certification Program Concerns (3); Legislative Updates (2); Job Posting Format (1); Conference Sessions (1).

4.3 Programs to Start

Q16: “What initiatives or programs should OEDA start doing (that it's not currently doing)?”

104 responses (39%). Top topics/themes ranked by number of mentions are as follows:

- Regional Programs & Networking (25 mentions): Regional networking events. Local/regional meetings and tours. Programs outside Columbus. Regional committee meetings. JobsOhio regional programming.
- Specialized Education/Training (20 mentions): Infrastructure 101. Public Finance training. Utilities education. Energy policy. Brownfields 101. Real estate development. Bond financing.
- Mentorship & Professional Development (15 mentions): Peer-to-peer mentoring. Support for new professionals. Career development paths. Leadership training. Mentorship program for new members.
- Expanded Outreach Programs (12 mentions): Council/elected official training. Programs for smaller communities. Programs for non-ED professionals. Education for community leaders. Municipal development strategies.
- Advanced/Specialized Topics (10 mentions): Site selection best practices. Housing development. Advanced programming. Deeper dives into specific topics. Specialized certifications.
- Other topics receiving less than ten mentions include: Advocacy & Policy (8), Research & Analysis (8), Specific New Events (8).

4.4 Suggestions for Improvement

Q24: “Do you have any suggestions for how OEDA can improve its programs, services, or overall member experience?”

80 responses (30%). Top topics/themes ranked by number of mentions are as follows:

- Accessibility & Format (15 mentions): More virtual/hybrid options to reduce costs. Regional programming to reduce travel. Recording sessions for on-demand access. More flexible scheduling. Cost considerations for smaller organizations.

- Strategic Focus & Leadership (12 mentions): Become go-to resource for ED questions. Better define economic/industrial development. Strengthen advocacy role. Clear value proposition. Enhanced policy influence.
- Communication & Engagement (10 mentions): More succinct communications. Improved member outreach. Continue leadership visits to communities. Better staff responsiveness. Enhanced website functionality.
- Educational Content (10 mentions): More specific, practical content. Less repetition in topics. More case studies. More interactive sessions. Better time management in sessions.
- Other topics with under ten mentions include: Member Connection (8 mentions), Cost & Value (8).

4.5 Additional Comments

Q25. “Is there anything else you would like to share with us? We welcome any additional feedback, thoughts, or suggestions.”

74 responses (28%). Top topics/themes ranked by number of mentions are as follows:

- Strong Leadership Feedback (25 mentions): Strong enthusiasm for David Zak’s leadership. Appreciation for new energy and direction. Positive response to listening sessions. Excitement about future direction. Recognition of immediate impact.
- Other topics receiving under ten mentions include: Newsletter Feedback (8 mentions); Content Suggestions (8 mentions); DEIB Considerations (5); Cost Considerations (5).

5. Member Priorities

5.1 Membership Benefit Value (out of 7.0)

Q9: “Membership Value: Please rank the following aspects of OEDA Membership in order of importance to you, with the top being the most valuable.”

If a member ranked a benefit first, it received 7 points. If they ranked it last, it received 1 point.

Networking/peer connections	5.5
Educational offerings	5.0
Learning about other communities’ initiatives	4.0
Staying informed about updates/trends	3.9
Connecting with key leaders	3.7
Impact on ED policy	3.3
Career development	2.6

5.2 Program Value (out of 4.0)

Q10: “Please rate the value of the following OEDA programs to you personally.”

(1 = Not Valuable, 2 = Somewhat Valuable, 3 = Valuable, 4 = Very Valuable)

Annual Summit	3.4
Legislative Updates	3.4
Basic Course	3.3
Newsletter	3.3
Core Courses	3.3
Educational Webinars	3.2
OhioCED Certification	3.0
Job Postings	2.8

5.3 Development Priorities (rated out of 5.0)

Q17: “Please rate the priority you believe each of the following areas of development should have for OEDA in 2025.” (1 = Not a Priority; 2 = Low Priority; 3 = Moderate Priority; 4 = High Priority; 5 = Top Priority)

Energy (Electricity, Gas)	3.9
Infrastructure (Water, Sewer, Fiber, Roadwork)	3.9
Workforce Development	3.8
Housing & Residential Development	3.8
Redevelopment	3.7
Real Estate (Parks, Sites, Buildings)	3.7
Community Development	3.6
Entrepreneurship & Small Business	3.6
Rural Development	3.4
Tech-Based Development	3.4
Retail & Downtown Development	3.1
Data Centers	2.9

5.4 Advocacy & Policy Priorities

Q18: “With OEDA restarting its Advocacy efforts, including Policy and Government Relations, how important do you feel these areas are for the organization’s focus in 2025?”

(1 = Not a Priority, 2 = Low Priority, 3 = Moderate Priority, 4 = High Priority, 5 = Top Priority)

Policy (Creating and supporting policies that drive economic growth)	4.1
Advocacy (Representing ED interests to policymakers)	4.0
Government Relations (Building relationships with officials to support ED)	4.0
Elected Official Education (Educating officials on ED)	3.9

5.5 DEIB Priorities

Q20: “How important are DEIB principles to your personal environment, professional environment, community/constituency, and how important is it to you that OEDA provide members with DEIB information, resources, and best practices?” This copies the terminology from the 2022 survey.

(1 = not important at all, 2 = somewhat unimportant, 3 = somewhat important, 4 = more important, 5 = very important)

	2022	2024
Professional Environment	3.5	3.7
Personal Environment	3.5	3.6
Community/Constituency	3.3	3.4
OEDA Providing DEIB Resources	3.3	3.3

6. Course & Topic Feedback

6.1 Additional Programmatic Feedback

Q11: “Are there other programs or services you find valuable, or is there any feedback you’d like to share about the programs above?”

91 responses (34%). Top topics/themes ranked by number of mentions are as follows:

- **Course Format & Scheduling Concerns (25 mentions):** Basic course timing and length issues. Requests for virtual/hybrid options. Desire for more flexible scheduling. Some find full-day sessions too intensive. Suggestions for more breaks and interactive elements.
- **Content Level & Targeting (20 mentions):** Need for advanced content for experienced professionals. Basic course valuable for newcomers but too basic for veterans. Desire for more specialized/niche topics. Request for content specific to rural/small communities. Municipal development focus needed.
- **OEDA Express Newsletter (15 mentions):** Generally positive feedback. Some suggest reducing frequency to biweekly. Appreciated for relevance and updates. Suggestions to tighten up content.
- **Leadership & Recent Changes (10 mentions):** Positive feedback about David Zak’s leadership. Appreciation for listening sessions. Improved communication noted.
- **Event/Location Format (10 mentions):** Mixed views on Summit location. Appreciation for moving Summit around state. Requests for more virtual hybrid options. Support for hybrid formats.
- **Other topic receiving less than ten mentions:** Networking (8 mentions).

6.2 Format Preferences

Q12: “What formats do you prefer for OEDA programming?”

Multiple selections were allowed for this question:

In-person	63%
Hybrid	52%
Virtual (Live)	37%
Recorded	27%

6.3 Suggested Topics

Q13: “Are there specific topics you would like OEDA to cover in future programming? (Examples: workforce development, funding strategies, community engagement, policy updates.)

164 responses. Top topics/themes ranked by number of mentions are as follows:

- **Workforce Development (40 mentions):** General workforce strategies. Talent attraction and retention. Training programs and partnerships.
- **Funding Strategies (35 mentions):** General funding opportunities. Grant programs. Creative financing solutions.
- **Policy Updates (30 mentions):** Legislative changes. State and federal policy impacts. Advocacy opportunities.
- **Community Engagement (25 mentions):** Public involvement. Stakeholder management. Communication strategies.
- **Housing (20 mentions):** Affordable housing. Housing development. Office-to-residential conversion.
- **Energy/Utilities (18 mentions):** Power infrastructure. Data center needs. Utility partnerships.
- **Rural development (15 mentions):** Small community strategies. Rural-specific challenges. Rural revitalization.
- **AI/Technology Impact (12 mentions):** AI in economic development. Technology advancement. Digital transformation.
- **Infrastructure Development (12 mentions):** Critical infrastructure. Development requirements. Infrastructure funding.
- **Tax Incentives (10 mentions):** TIF. Tax abatements. Incentive structures.

- Site Development (10 mentions): Site readiness. Site selection. Property development.
- Other topics with under 10 mentions include: BR&E (8), JobsOhio Programs (8), Downtown Development (7), Marketing Strategies (7), Leadership Development (6), Economic Impact Analysis (6), Transportation (5), Brownfield Development (5), Small Business Support (4).

6.4 Tools & Tech

Q19: “What tools and technologies are you most interested in exploring or learning about?”

114 responses. Top topics/themes ranked by number of mentions are as follows:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) (45 mentions): General AI in ED. ChatGPT. AI for daily work. AI for site selection. AI implementation strategies.
- Data & Analytics Tools (15 mentions): Lightcast. IMPLAN. Data visualization tools. Analytics software. Tableau.
- GIS & Mapping (10 mentions): GIS programs. ZoomProspector. Site planning tools. Virtual site tours. Interactive mapping.
- Other topics with less than ten mentions include: CRM Systems (8), Real Estate & Site Selection Tools (8), Project Management Tools (6), Digital Marketing Tools (5), Financial Analysis Tools (5).

6.5 EDO Management

Q21: “If you lead, manage, or are involved in managing an Economic Development Organization (EDO), please select the areas that are most challenging and indicate if you would like OEDA to offer programming in these areas.”

149 responses (56% of total responses):

Funding & Financial Resources	60%
Politics & Government Relations	50%
Marketing & Communication	42%
Annual Planning & Evaluation	38%
Board Management & Governance	28%
Staffing & HR Management	15%
Stress & Crisis Management	13%

7. Member Involvement

7.1 Sharing Expertise

Q22: If you could share insights from one or two areas, projects, or programs where you’ve had significant success, developed an innovative approach, or gained expertise, what would those topics be?”

124 responses (46% of total responses) . Top topics/themes ranked by number of mentions are as follows:

- Workforce Development (20 mentions): K-12 partnerships. Internship programs. Talent attraction/retention. Industry partnerships. School-business collaboration.
- Site Readiness & Development (15 mentions): Site readiness. Megasites. Spec building development. SiteOhio certification. Industrial site planning.
- Business Retention & Expansion/BR&E (12 mentions): Program management. Regional collaboration. Outreach strategies. Business engagement. Success tracking.

- Project Finance & Funding (12 mentions): Grant writing/management. PACE. Public-private partnerships. Creative financing solutions.
- Downtown/Property Development (10 mentions): Redevelopment projects. Brownfield conversion. Office-to-residential conversion. Mixed-use development. Small business support.
- Regional Collaboration (10 mentions): Multi-stakeholder partnerships. Cross-jurisdiction projects. Regional marketing. Collaborative programs. Resource sharing.
- Other topics receiving less than ten mentions include: Specific project types (8), Community Engagement (8).

7.2 Committee Involvement

Q23: “Would you be interested in assisting with any of the following OEDA committees or initiatives?”

136 responses (51%) (number of responses provided, not a percentage):

Policy & Legislative	56
Professional Development	54
Board of Directors	53
Annual Summit	52
Leadership & Governance (Board, Nominating Committee)	29
Financial (Finance Committee)	18
DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging)	17
Spring Event	17
Membership & Member Relations	16
Communications & Marketing	14
Fundraising & Investor Recruitment	4