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# Cleveland Business

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## JobsOhio is adding recruiting to portfolio

Six of its regional partners, including Team NEO, will help companies attract and train talent

By Jay Miller

Companies are making the availability of the right kind of talent an increasingly important factor when they evaluate locations for new business operations.

So JobsOhio, the state's nonprofit business attraction organization, is turning that need into an incentive. It is creating what it calls a talent acquisition service that can be used as an enticement to woo companies to Ohio. Through its six regional economic development partners, including Team Northeast Ohio, JobsOhio will offer a target business — and will fund as an incentive to bring a new operation to Ohio — a custom program that will attract the kind of talented job candidates the company will need, then screen and train them.

JobsOhio finds that it's competing to attract new businesses with states, especially in the South, that can give a company looking around the country the confidence that a new operation in a given state can attract talent that meets the company's skill needs and hiring deadlines.

"What we want to offer them is a customized and tailored talent strategy and services that accompany that talent strategy," said Cheryl Hay, JobsOhio's director of talent acquisition. "We would sit down with that company and understand the number of occupations, the type of skills they need, as well as the culture fit they are looking for, and we would tailor a program around that scope of work."

That program could include any or all of four kinds of assistance. It could create a program to identify where the particular talent is — software engineers, welders, nurses, etc. — and market the new jobs on those areas, then develop tailored job postings, screen candidates and finally train them for any specific skills the target company requires.

The program will use the state's existing workforce and education infrastructure and outside services as needed.

The Ohio program is likened to Louisiana's FastStart program. That program, started in 2008, creates custom, and often high-tech, recruitment and training products for companies that agree to bring more jobs to Louisiana.

Steve Weitzner, principal in Cleveland's Silverlode Consulting, a site-selection consulting firm, said one of his clients was looking around the country for a place to open a second location for a sophisticated assembly operation and considered Louisiana.

"The company was concerned they wouldn't be able to replicate what they had (in New England) to do the (assembly) process," Weitzner said. "Louisiana recruited and trained people on this production line. All on the state's dime. It was really remarkable."

JobsOhio will have Hay and a small staff guiding the program in Columbus, but its regional partners will create the custom programs. Hay said JobsOhio expects to begin offering the programs by the first of next year.

Hay couldn't say how much the service will cost JobsOhio, since each project will be designed to meet the

needs of the target company.

Among the key partners will be the state's community colleges, which offer many targeted job-training programs, and Ohio Means Jobs, the state program that online and at its local offices, matches employees with employers.

To handle the local end, Team NEO has hired Michael Stanton as regional talent manager. Stanton, a Northeast Ohio native, was until recently the director of human resources in Atlanta for two businesses of the Audia Group, a polymer company.

Stanton, who joined Team NEO in July, said he is laying the groundwork — developing recruitment software, partnering with workforce programs — for the four services JobsOhio has outlined, and will focus in particular on trying to woo Northeast Ohio natives back to the region.

"I was human resources manager of a plastics firm. We did an expansion project and I was on the receiving end of this type of service," he said. "What's going to make us unique is that we are going to tailor it to each company we work with."

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