



**2023  
ANNUAL  
REPORT**




**GAC**  
GREATER AKRON CHAMBER

## MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT


 **2,259 members**  
(16% increase from 2022)

 **Retained 87% of members**

 **Increased top level of membership, GAC Chair's Circle**, from 30 to 48 companies over the last two years

 **Hosted nearly 50 events** and programs, creating opportunities for over 4,000 member attendees to connect, learn and engage

 **Celebrated 30 of Greater Akron's leaders under age 40** at the *2023 30 For the Future*

 **Produced 31 podcasts** as part of the Dreamers, Drivers and Doers series, bringing visibility to Greater Akron's leaders and key initiatives

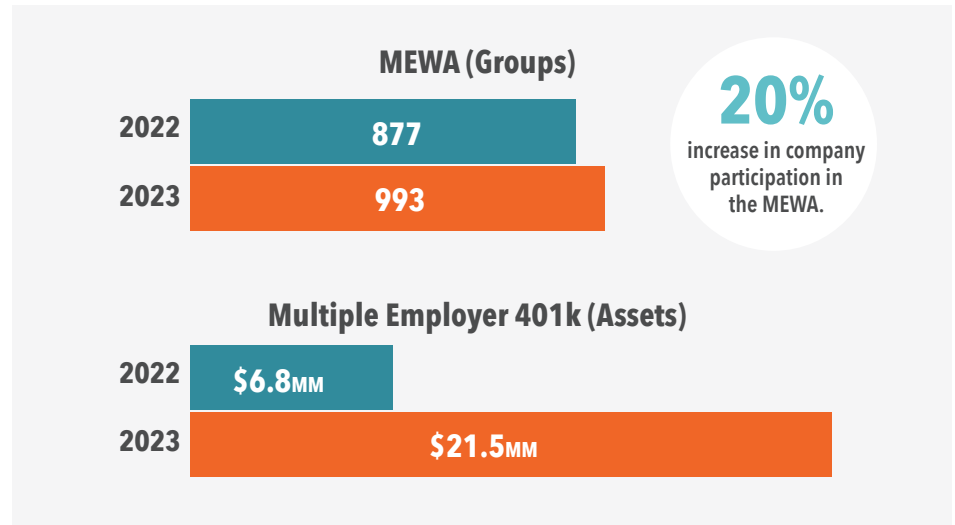
## ECONOMIC INCLUSION & OPPORTUNITY

 **Established the Supplier Diversity Procurement Council** to better connect minority, women, and disadvantaged businesses with larger businesses to increase procurement activity

 **Increased the connectivity and strengthened networks** through 3 Women's Network Leadership Institute (WNLI) Leadership Dialogues and 2 Leading with Strength cohorts, engaging 400 participants

## MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Strong continued double-digit growth for Small Business Multiple Employer Health Benefit Arrangement (MEWA) now reaching almost 1,100 small businesses. Small Business Multiple Employer 401k (MEP) doubled in size to over \$24 million in assets.



## ELEVATE GREATER AKRON

### ElevateGreaterAkron

Facilitating philanthropic and partner support for EGA policy office and site development initiatives to drive collaboration to advance regional economic development efforts.

 **\$2.5MM** in new resources for economic development efforts.

Launched [GreaterAkronBusinessNavigator.org](https://GreaterAkronBusinessNavigator.org) providing broad access to help and support for small and mid-sized businesses.

 **7,700 users**  
top searched resources included access to capital/financing, networking opportunities, and access to affordable professional services.

**200+**  
support resources profiled

**60+**  
support organizations featured

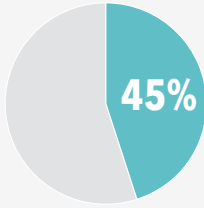
 [elevategreaterakron.org](https://elevategreaterakron.org)

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# 295

**business retention and expansion visits with companies**

45% of these visits were with MBE/WBE owned companies



Economic development activity in Greater Akron resulted in

# 27

**closed projects**

# 400

**new jobs**

# \$240MM

**in investment in Greater Akron**

# \$33MM

**in payroll created**



"Akron, USA's" reengagement in domestic and international marketing initiatives, especially in support of the Polymer Industry Cluster, has reinforced Greater Akron's reputation as a global leader in this industry.

## POLYMER INDUSTRY CLUSTER

Secured US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration designation as Sustainable Polymers Tech Hub and \$400K strategy development grant. Designation provides opportunity to compete for \$70 million to advance our work and will support industry attraction.



# \$125MM Innovation Hub

**Drove effort to establish funding for new State of Ohio Innovation Hubs to leverage private investment in Ohio in places like Greater Akron to pursue innovation and growth agendas that will benefit the state.**

From lobbying the DeWine Administration to engaging with the Ohio House and Senate, Akron has paved the way for significant investments in multiple unique high-growth opportunities across Ohio.

Several years of conversations with Ohio's Congressional Delegation resulted in successful lobbying efforts to include language in Senate version of NDAA to redesignate rubber as a strategic material which will result in increased R&D funding for the polymer industry.

# \$20MM

**in private sector, philanthropic, and local government commitments** committed to industry development opportunities

# 61

**public and private partners in the Polymer Industry Cluster**



**THE POLYMER INDUSTRY CLUSTER®**  
Powered by the  
Greater Akron Chamber

Established 5 working groups for the Polymer Industry Cluster, focused on B2B, membership, R&D, startups, and workforce, engaging over 45 companies in cluster development efforts.



# 40

**meetings with state and federal elected officials and policy makers to educate, prioritize and gain support for the work of the Polymer Industry Cluster.**



# 83

**industry attendees**

Our second annual Polymer Cluster Connectivity Conference solidified an ongoing commitment for networking and dialogue among industry leaders and created a platform for aligning vision and action to leverage our region's strengths in the industry to accelerate opportunity.

The conference keynote, Director Lydia Mihalik of the Ohio Department of Development, applauded the polymer consortium for its organization, persistence, planning, and aligned vision for leveraging its strengths to drive growth in the region.

## WORKFORCE SUPPORT

# 75

**5th and 6th grade students** participated in the Celebration of STEM Event at The University of Akron where they could see demonstrations by university students and [ACCESS](#) member societies.

# \$933K

**secured to support Manufacturing, Healthcare, I.T., and Polymer Industry Workforce partnerships.**

# 40

**company I.T. leaders engaged** in feasibility of IT Sector Partnership opportunity for Greater Akron.

# 63



**Akron Public Schools, Barberton, and Kent City School students** supported in summer experiences related to advanced manufacturing, healthcare, I.T., and polymers.

**Initiated polymer sector partnership workforce efforts in support of youth and adult industry opportunities.**

# 56



**chemistry students** at Barberton High School participated in the Great Trail Council's Exploring program, an immersive experience with interactive activities throughout the school year to help students make the connection between chemistry and polymers, connect with polymer leaders, and learn about career paths in the industry.



conXusNEO

[conxusneo.jobs](https://conxusneo.jobs)

## EXPANDED WORK-BASED LEARNING

Supported employers to create



# 532

**manufacturing apprentices**

through USDOL Scaling Apprentice Program

Developed a **step-by-step guide** and provided webinars about Tech Cred during each month the application was available, to allow for greater visibility and access to these resources for businesses.

# 380+

**Akron Public Schools' (APS) students** participated in summer employment that aligned with their career pathway, a collaborative with APS, Jobs for Ohio's Graduates, Summit County Job & Family Services, Youth Success Summit, and United Way of Summit & Medina County.

## Job coach pilot results in 10% retention performance.

As part of the employer [Success Coach initiative](#), supported by ConxusNEO, piloted job coach initiative with seven agencies of the Summit County Developmental Disabilities to strengthen relationships within the organization and address retention issues. This initiative sets a foundation for employers to implement these strategies in their own organizations.