



OHIO
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
ASSOCIATION

September 15, 2026

Stephanie Gilchrist
City of Youngstown

Dear Stephanie,

On behalf of the Ohio Economic Development Association, it is our great pleasure to inform you that you have successfully completed all requirements of the Ohio Certified Economic Developer program and have been formally approved for certification as an Ohio Certified Economic Developer (OhioCED).

This approval follows a comprehensive review of your Capstone Paper, Capstone Presentation, and Scenario assignments. Your work was evaluated by your peers — practicing professionals who understand firsthand the judgment, technical skill, and ethical grounding this field demands. That distinction matters: the OhioCED designation is conferred by the profession itself, and the confidence your colleagues have expressed in your work is a meaningful endorsement.

We also want to thank you. Earning this certification required a substantial investment of time and energy, much of it drawn from hours already claimed by a demanding job. Your willingness to make that investment strengthens the standard of practice for every professional who follows you, and we are grateful for it.

The OhioCED designation signals to employers, elected officials, site selectors, and the residents of your community that you practice at a recognized professional standard. We encourage you to carry that standard forward: to take an active role in OEDA, and above all to mentor those entering the field behind you. You now have both the credential and the credibility to do exactly that.

Your certification will be officially awarded on Thursday, October 8 at the Awards Luncheon at OEDA's Annual Summit in Dayton, Ohio. Please let us know if you will be able to join us at that time to receive your well-deserved recognition.

Congratulations again on this well-earned achievement. We are proud to count you among the 130 professionals who now hold the OhioCED designation.

Sincerely,

David R. Zak
President and CEO
Ohio Economic Development Association

Mark Barbash
Director
Ohio Economic Development Institute