

## Paper is dead, long live Digital Transformation!

**ODJFS Digital 7078 transformed the workforce user experience, making users more productive on day one by replacing 30-year-old paper forms with an AI-powered secure digital platform.**

**CATEGORY:** Business Process Innovations

**STATE:** State of Ohio

**AGENCY:** Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

**PROJECT INITIATION:** May 2021

**PROJECT END DATE:** May 2023

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# Executive Summary

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is responsible for managing a number of vital health and human services programs that directly impact the lives and the well-being of Ohioans by strengthening families and promoting economic stability. These include cash and food assistance, job training and employment services, childcare, unemployment insurance, children services and adoption, adult protective services, and child support programs. The programs are administered by twelve business offices and bureaus and delivered through 88 counties, a combined workforce population of 25,000. This required the Office of Information Services (OIS) to implement innovative solutions that allowed timely provisioning of required access to its state and county workforce for delivering these critical services to the constituents.

ODJFS had been processing access requests for its workforce using a “7078—Code of Responsibility” paper form and 10 other individual paper forms, which required wet signatures from the user, their manager, and additional email-based approvals from business offices. These paper forms then had to be sent to the ODJFS Account management team, faxed to the respective program offices, and later scanned and uploaded into a FileNet system. This centralized access provisioning model via paper forms was error prone, required multiple back and forth hand-offs, took around three weeks and led to a backlog of 800+ access request tickets each month. This slowed down innovation, automation, and adoption of latest market capabilities.

In partnership with the Department of Administrative Services (DAS)—InnovateOhio Platform (IOP) program, ODJFS embarked on a digital transformation journey to convert their paper-based business processes by leveraging the IOP cloud-based Identity and User Experience platform to transform the free-form access request to a role-based access request and leverage artificial intelligence capabilities to recommend appropriate roles/access from over 1000+ business roles, strengthen the governance, risk and compliance enforcement and replace the wet signatures via annual digital access recertification, user attestation, and auditing capabilities.

State managers and county administrators now have a single portal to request access and provide their digital attestation to the code of responsibility with a clear governance and support model. Since the initial rollout, ODJFS has further expanded the portal's capabilities to include FAQ chatbots and enable automation of virtual private network (VPN) access requests for a fully remote workforce—during and after the pandemic. The pandemic further accelerated the agency's digital transformation with more applications and sister agencies requesting to be onboarded, with a path to enable Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) - powered program that provides access and workflow recommendations to the state managers and county local security coordinators.

# IDEA

**Legacy ODJFS paper-based processes and ticket backlog.** The processes by which ODJFS employees were onboarded to the various systems and applications had been the same paper and pencil approval processes for over 30 years. When a new employee was hired, a paper 7078 form that listed their access and user details was created with wet signatures from both the manager and the user. This was then passed manually to various approvers, managers, and county local security coordinators (LSCs) until it was finally scanned or filed, and access was granted by the account management team. This process could take as long as three weeks to accomplish manually and increased the ticket backlog to 800 per month. Additionally, 15 paper forms had to be signed and submitted for applications such as Child Support, Childcare Licensing Quality System, VPN, Workforce Development, Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT), Unemployment Insurance, and Medicaid Information Technology System (MITS).

**Error-prone processes, lack of centralized user view and high total cost of ownership (TCO).** Numerous back-and-forth communications were required between requestors and approvers to complete this process, as the paper forms from the requestors would have errors and insufficient details, causing delays in the employee being able to execute core responsibilities for their jobs. The agency's operating model included a small, centralized account management team to fulfill the entire agency's access and compliance needs, thereby creating bottlenecks and an increasing request backlog. This led to an increase in the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) for the agency as the staff would not be productive from day one due to their access.

**Inter-agency digitization collaboration for cyber maturity, innovation, governance, auditability and lower TCO.** ODJFS and DAS IOP leadership recognized this challenge and collaborated on implementing enterprise digitization capabilities to serve the agency's needs. The agencies created an ODJFS digitization strategy and roadmap for the 7078 and other paper forms via a fully decentralized compliance, provisioning and deprovisioning model. ODJFS was an early adopter of the enterprise platform capabilities and used this as an opportunity to further accelerate the platform growth with its forward-looking vision as a leading health and human services agency.

**Evolution of the ODJFS Digitization program.** This ODJFS strategy was unique from other digital transformation programs, as the agency built a consensus with their multiple stakeholders to digitize their paper forms and enable an end-end digital system, with tie-in to the state's enterprise governance, risk, and compliance programs.

It also aligns with Governor DeWine's Executive order for state and county agencies to adopt the InnovateOhio Platform for Digital Identity and User Experience. The program is constantly evolving to further leverage the latest innovation and cloud-first solution capabilities, such as chatbots, AI, ML-powered digital solution with workflow automation, and a unified system for other sister agencies.

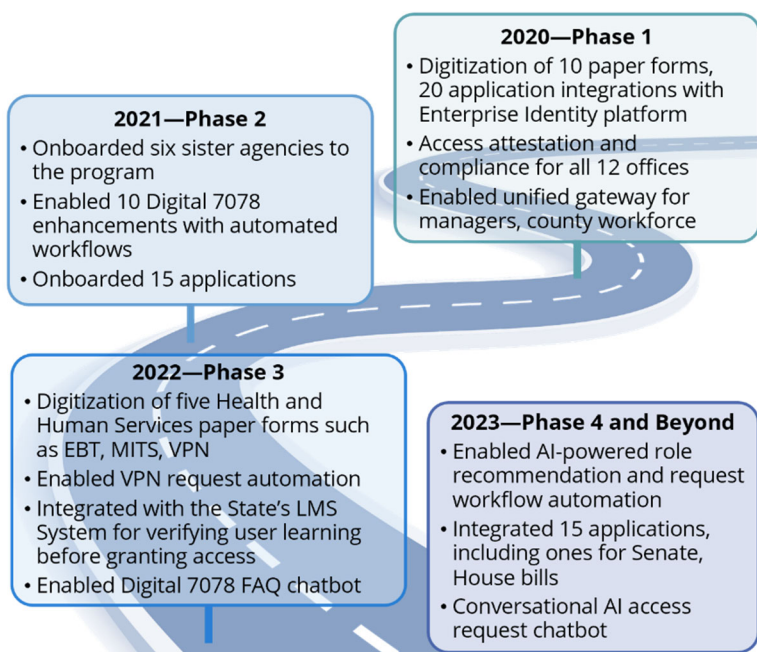


Figure. ODJFS Digitization Roadmap

# Implementation

## A. Stakeholders Buy-in

Given this project involved changing a 30-year-old process, the ODJFS and DAS teams collaborated to obtain stakeholder buy-in early on to ensure the program's success. We engaged ODJFS stakeholders, such as the Chief Privacy Officer, General Counsel, Program office Bureau Chiefs, CISO, and County Relationship Manager, to get buy-in from the business offices and counties. The project kickoff included the ODJFS business offices, state leadership, Program Management Office, county user experience team, county local security coordinators, and operations teams.

## B. Execution

This program was delivered in compliance with Ohio Revised Code (ORC) and other leading industry standards such as the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) SP. 800—53, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Publication 1075 — Account Management and Access control family of regulations.

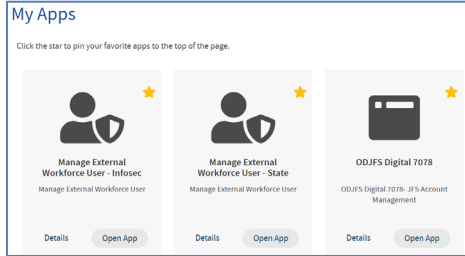
We conducted requirements sessions with the ODJFS Program office Bureau Chiefs, Directors, and ODJFS General Counsel to receive approval for digitizing 15 paper forms into a unified digital solution that also satisfied the auditability, approval and supervisor authorization, attestation requirements for the agency. Agile Sprint and the agency's lean methodology were leveraged for execution and sprint demos were conducted with the Helpdesk, program offices, managers, and County User Experience teams to get early feedback. The digital 7078 platform is hosted on the enterprise cloud platform and leverages components such as: public cloud, Web Forms, content management platform, identity and access management, DevSecOps solutions for collaboration, code and project management, and the state AI, ML platform.

The engagement was delivered using the following teams:

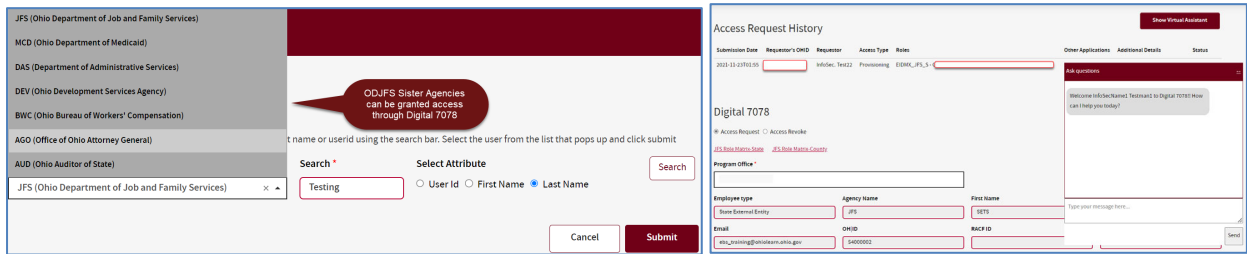
1. **Program Management Office (PMO).** To keep the state leadership informed of the status of the program and keep track of the milestones.
2. **User Experience (UX).** A total of 15 paper forms and different business processes such as VPN, EBT, Child Support, Unemployment insurance, MITS, Child Care licensing were combined into a single digital form with validations for each application built in its own self-contained unit. An intuitive Digital 7078 tile was dynamically given to the state managers and county LSCs. Form validations and verifications were performed even before a ticket was opened. Wet signatures were replaced with a tile-based digital attestation system with training verification.
3. **Cybersecurity**
  - a. **Identity Management.** Approval and orchestration workflows for user access provisioning, 12 program office approvals were built with end-end provisioning for most applications and indirect fulfilment for the other applications via integration with the state's ticketing system.
  - b. **Access Management.** Access controls were implemented to only allow the respective county administrators to be able to submit access requests for their county workforce.
4. **AI, ML.** To further evolve the digital transformation program, AI capabilities were added to the Digital 7078 platform. AI algorithms were built using the ODJFS AI, ML platform, with the learning and training data set as the ODJFS state and county organizational data. The ML models are trained and retrained every month with the ODJFS organizational data. The AI, ML solution will streamline and unify the multiple business office workflows across the ODJFS state and county populations.
5. **Operations and Infrastructure.** The Enterprise Infrastructure and Operations team assisted with the maintenance of the Web Forms platform and migration of design and workflow changes through the different application environments.
6. **Organizational Change Management.** ODJFS and IOP collaborated to launch a massive communications marketing campaign to provide all ODJFS Program Offices real time updates on the status of the digital 7078 project tailored to their needs. Further, county LSCs were provided their own updates and communications to allow the counties to be kept informed while considering their personalized interactions with the digital 7078 platform. Other vehicles for change included articles published in the monthly "Bits and Bytes" newsletter, and informative training sessions with demonstrations to give users the experience of the new digital 7078 and to gauge satisfaction.

Depicted below are the unified Digital 7078 system features: Program office access submission for workforce, FAQ chatbot, AI role recommendation, digital user attestation to code of responsibility.

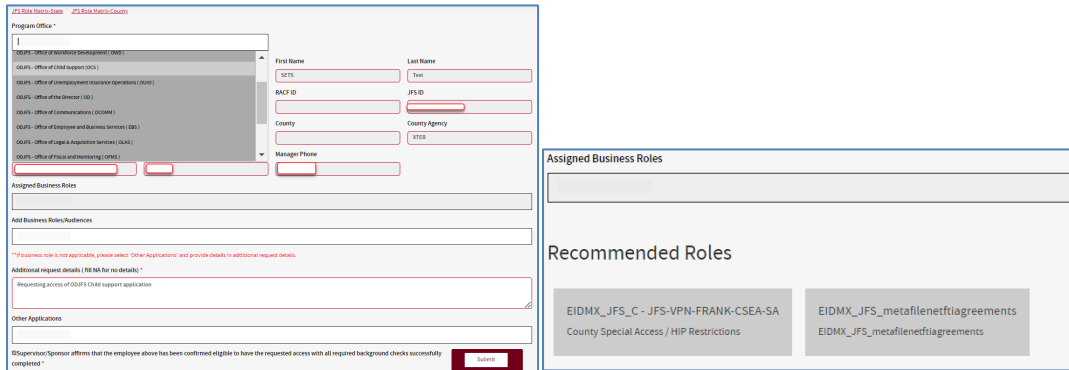
**Figure 1.** ODJFS Digital 7078 tile in IOP App. Store



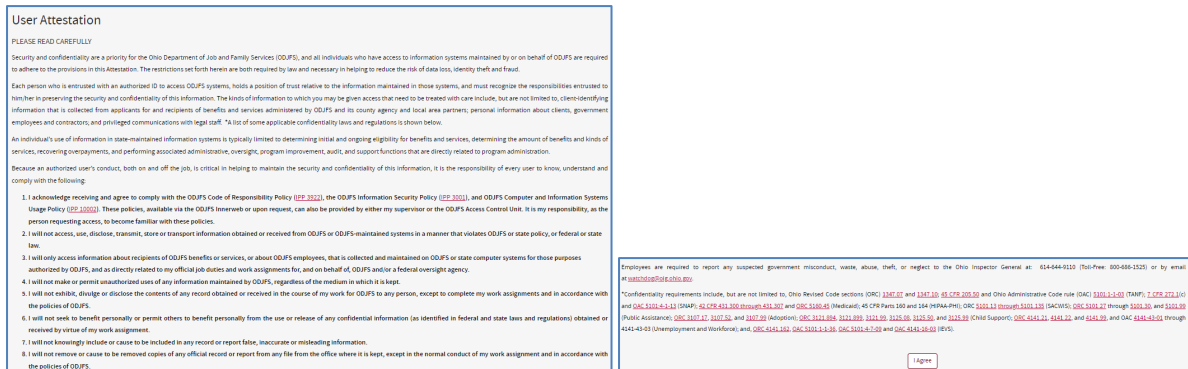
**Left to Right. Figure 2.** Digital 7078 user search for managers, county LSCs to look up ODJFS and sister agency users. **Figure 3.** FAQ chatbot on the Digital 7078 landing page



**Left to Right. Figure 4.** Digital 7078 landing page with the 12 ODJFS program office selection and 15 consolidated forms. **Figure 5.** Role recommendation in Digital 7078 using AI, ML model



**Figure 6.** ODJFS digital user attestation to code of responsibility



# Impact

The Digital 7078 system is now the single, “one-stop-shop” digital portal for state managers and county LSCs to request ODJFS access for their workforce and sister agency workforce with digital signature and attestation capabilities, eliminating the need for multiple request submissions. The Digital 7078 now houses requests and sends updates to requestors eliminating the need for one-off communications and has become the source of truth for provisioning and de-provisioning access with a centralized user view. Through this digital transformation, automated request emails can be generated informing approvers of pending requests. Access for multiple applications and systems can be bucketed together under a single “role”, providing a requestor a clearer understanding of what role to request and powered with AI to increase the confidence level for the requestor and approver, enabling streamlined business processes for the state and county workforce.

Following were the key process efficiencies and benefits from this program:

1. Eliminated 7078 paper forms and digitized the state services via a unified portal, with reduction in submission errors by enforcing validation and verification, even before a ticket is opened.
2. Reduced manual intervention and multiple hand-offs with the digital platform.
3. Enhanced auditability, centralized user view for access tracking and converted the ad-hoc process to a role-based access control model with an automated provisioning/deprovisioning, least privilege model to improve the agency’s cybersecurity posture.
4. Replaced wet signatures with a tile-based digital attestation system along with training verification.
5. Fewer rejections with AI, ML powered role recommendation from 1000+ business roles and enabling role rationalization efforts.
6. Increased responsiveness to multiple annual IRS, Attorney General’s Office, and Office of Budget Management audits.
7. Increased compliance with policies and procedures through integration with the state’s learning management system.
8. Enabled seamless remote work transition during the pandemic and 100% remote work post pandemic.
9. Freed up agency staff to work on other high priority initiatives.
10. Served as a catalyst for the execution of the ODJFS Identity Governance roadmap with adoption of enterprise capabilities such as Single Sign-on, Identity proofing, and Multifactor Authentication that were previously not available with the legacy ODJFS identity platform.
11. Improved user engagement with the FAQ chatbot and access recommendations.
12. Decentralized operational support model to efficiently route enhancement requests from managers and counties.
13. Savings on space, paper storage costs, file cabinets, printing, and equipment costs.
14. Going paper-free is one way to increase efficiency in our lives and leave a smaller carbon footprint on our planet.

## Digital 7078 by the numbers

- Onboarded 60 applications
- Managed access for 25k state and county workforce users
- Integrated 12 program offices, 88 counties, 5 state and county Helpdesk teams
- Added six sister agencies to the platform
- Reduced request processing SLA from 21 days to one day
- Improved access request confidence level by 90% using AI, ML capabilities
- Cut down ticket backlog by 90% and increased cost savings from reduced staff overtime
- Significantly improved customer experience

### Testimonials from State and County Leaders:

*"The switch to ODJFS digital provisioning has modernized our outdated manual methods of provisioning user accounts while offering significant time and effort savings to our local security coordinator staff. The new digital method has automated handwritten processes that were prone to human mistakes with new tools that eliminate errors, improved efficiency, and enforces role-based assignment rights to our networks and solutions.*

*We now have a product that has streamlined the demands of managing our 16,000 county users while enhancing secured access into our large complex computing environment."*

— **Larry Lynch, County Operations Director**

*"One in four Ohioans depend on the Ohio job and family service system at any point in time and anything in the eligibility process that cannot be automated requires manual procedures. Digital 7078 significantly reduces paperwork, meaning county workers have more time to do meaningful casework and improve the lives of residents in need of assistance."*

— **Joel Potts, Executive Director, Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association**

*"Overall, the Digital 7078 process has significantly improved our internal onboarding and role-based provisioning by simplifying processes, enhancing efficiency, accuracy, security, and the overall employee experience.*

- *Streamlined onboarding: The Digital 7078 process has simplified and accelerated our onboarding procedures, ensuring new employees can quickly start contributing to their roles.*
- *Efficient and automated: The process automates tasks, freeing up HR and IT resources for more strategic initiatives and reducing delays or administrative bottlenecks.*
- *Accurate role assignment: Standardized workflows and predefined templates ensure precise role-based provisioning, eliminating human error and ensuring compliance with security policies.*
- *Enhanced security: The process strengthens security measures by implementing robust identity and access management controls, minimizing the risk of unauthorized access or data breaches."*

— **Dustin Kendall, Hamilton County Local Security Coordinator**

*"The digital 7078 process has made it easier:*

- *In keeping track of access requests and when they were submitted and if the access for some items have been granted.*
- *Less paperwork to deal with*
- *The ability to screenshot it and share it with users that do better in seeing their access on their accounts*
- *Showing who made the access request*
- *Sends out automated messages for some roles, confirming that the request has been received, approved, and denied.*
  - *Showing the denial reason*
- *Having all the listed roles under each office in drop down boxes, aiding in quick identification*
  - *Allowing the role to also be typed in which narrows down the request*
- *Easy to view information on shared user access with the agency Ohio Means Jobs"*

— **Jason Snowbrick, Cuyahoga County Technical Point of Contact**

*"Yes, the Digital 7078 process has greatly reduced the interval for obtaining access. In the past, it could take several weeks before access was granted. Since the inception of the Digital 7078 we sometimes receive the requested access within 24 hours."*

— **Brian Pappada, Franklin County Local Security Coordinator**

*"No longer do we have to actually print out the 7078 form and send it and have to wait for the recipient to fill it out and sign it. They try to make out their handwriting to get everything entered correctly. The digital fillable form is great and leads to less errors and getting their access set up more quickly."*

— **Scott Momberg, Hamilton County Local Security Coordinator**

*"I am pleased with the Digital 7078 process! The Role Base Provisioning has definitely improved for our New Hires especially the SACWIS and SETS provisioning!"*

— **Kevin Anderson, Hamilton County LSC**