



Workforce GPS: Ohio Career Navigator

You're just four steps away from a brighter future.

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Category

Digital Services:
Government to Citizen

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Agency

DAS

State

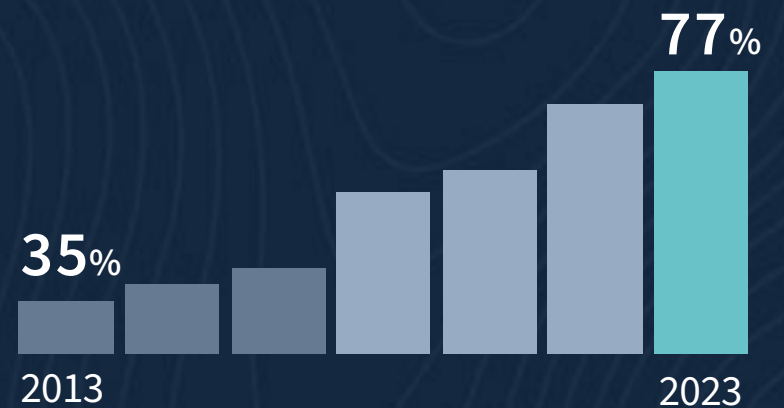
Ohio

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A record-breaking talent shortage is challenging our state government – and other states – to reimagine our approach to career and education services.

Global Talent Shortage Reaches a 17-year-high

Nearly 4 in 5 employers globally report difficulty finding the skilled talent they need in 2023, strengthening +2 percentage points year-over-year and more than double the difficulty in 2015 (38%).



“2023 Global Talent Shortage” by ManpowerGroup
manpowergroup.com/talentshortage

The bond between education and business is tightening and states cannot afford to think about the two independently. We need an efficient and effective connection of job seekers to employment, educational, and training opportunities to help both businesses and Ohioans successfully traverse this landscape.

In Ohio, a range of agencies, non-profit groups, and corporate entities from both the employment and educational fields produce job readiness resources. However, these entities were often siloed. Ohioans lacked a central, reputable, and secure platform that could help them recognize and access the resources that are right for them, regardless of who provided them. Ohio needed a solution that would not only increase awareness of these resources at the state and business levels, but also personalize, streamline, and increase Ohioans use of them.

In 2023, several State of Ohio entities partnered to consolidate the state’s most critical and beneficial career and education resources into a single, interactive website that could help Ohioans find and focus on the tools and resources best suited to their goals. State-level partners included the Governor’s Office of Workforce Transformation, InnovateOhio, the DAS InnovateOhio Platform (IOP); and the Ohio Departments of Administrative Services (DAS), Job & Family Services (ODJFS), Higher Education (ODHS), and Education and Workforce (ODE).

The Ohio Career Navigator launched on March 5, 2024. Since then, more than 100,000 people have accessed the tool, which is hosted on the state’s OhioMeansJobs website. After just two months, more than 16,000 Ohioans have completed the Career Navigator survey and received personalized resource lists and attainment plans carefully curated to broaden their opportunities. What’s more, 1 out of every 5 Ohioans who take the survey have returned to their secure profiles to revisit their results and adjust their roadmaps.

The Ohio Career Navigator is based on real-world experience provided by a combination of state agencies, workforce leaders, education experts, Ohioans focus groups and more. Many of these entities were working together for the first time, or in ways they had never before collaborated. Work continues to grow and modify the Ohio Career Navigator and we are excited to build upon the valuable partnerships that not only combine resources in one location, but also gives them a logical framework and incentivizes Ohioans to take advantage of them.

IDEA

One of the biggest challenges facing Ohio is having twice as many positions to fill as people to fill them. The Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation and partner agencies around the state are committed to getting the right people prepared for and connected to the right positions at the right times.

Many Ohioans are interested in finding a job, advancing their education, or obtaining a certification. Unfortunately, they can get easily overwhelmed with the more than 25 different online state resources that specifically support career advancement and continued education.

Ohio Career Navigator Charts a Course for Ohioans, who:

- ✓ Wish to switch careers but don't know how to find a new one;
- ✓ Want to find a first or new job; and
- ✓ Want a new skill but are not sure they can attain or afford the class or certification they need.



The Ohio Career Navigator was designed to help Ohioans easily find resources to obtain high-demand skills, attain meaningful employment, advance their education, and achieve their career goals.

Regardless of how helpful the information available is, nothing beats personalized help. The team carefully mapped Career Navigator resources to key demographics based on each agency's knowledge of need in their respective areas of expertise. The team then developed survey questions to connect site visitors with the best resources for them based on who they are and what they want to do. An ongoing governance board monitors, reviews, and maps evolving resources as they become available to ensure results are current.

A closer look at the Career Navigator Journey

A statewide identity is the fabric of an intuitive, interactive user for anyone interacting with the state's systems.

The Career Navigator matches respondents to curated resources and provides visitors with a personalized roadmap for achieving their specific career and educational goals in four steps.

Step 1

The Career Navigator is built on the state's OHID platform, which allows Ohioans and businesses to securely sign into multiple state agency systems and access a range of state services with just one account.



OHID ensures:

- ✓ **Security and privacy come first;** securing data and information entrusted to the state is of foremost importance.
- ✓ **Self-service** and choice for customers to manage their own interactions.
- ✓ **Single Sign On** capabilities to all state agencies that have onboarded to the OHID platform.



For nearly **six million** current OHID users, the Career Navigator tool is automatically embedded in their “my digital profile” tab. This allows for a safe and secure session and the ability to retain their results for future interactions.

Step 2

Once logged into the Career Navigator, Ohioans only need to answer a few targeted questions to access content and services tailored to them. Survey questions are based on context, but may include:

- What is the highest level of school you've completed?
- Do you need help finding a school?
- Do you need help paying for your education?
- Are you interested in career related resources?
- What is the main goal of your job search?
- Are you interested in an internship, training program, or credential program to learn new skills?
- Are you looking for financial resources?
- Are you interested in any of these additional topics?
Childcare; Unemployment; Military & Veterans; Restored Citizens (formerly incarcerated)


Step 3

Ohioans receive personalized and tailored recommendations based on what they are looking for. The Career Navigator connects individuals with comprehensive and up-to-date information from state and external sources, empowering them to make informed decisions for a bright future.

Amanda, your path to success starts here.


Get personalized resources to help you reach your goals.

Based on your survey responses, here are your top five resources.




Adult Learners College Checklist

A guide for adults pursuing education and career...




Ohio Technical Centers (OTC)

Ohio Technical Centers (OTCs) provide post-secondary career and...




For Job Seekers

Post your resume.
Search jobs or skills.
Get best practices fo...



Career Pathways

Comprehensive resources from education to wages ...



Write a Great Resume

A well-written resume helps you stand out from the crowd....

Resource Connection Possibilities (include but are not limited to):

- ✓ Job/Internship Postings and Trends
- ✓ Workforce Inventory of Education and Training
- ✓ Veteran Talent Reports
- ✓ Integrated Postsecondary Education System
- ✓ Information for Restored Citizens
- ✓ Free Application for Federal Student Aid
- ✓ Career Profile Tool
- ✓ Scholarship, Grant, and Funding Opportunities
- ✓ School Finder
- ✓ National Student Debt Clearinghouse
- ✓ Ohio Labor Market Information
- ✓ Career Cluster Inventory (based on interests)

IMPLEMENTATION

The project team’s first goal was to gather potential user data to create a meaningful, inclusive, and scalable service that could holistically guide Ohioans through the career advancement resources they desire.

Focus Group Persona	Invited	Attendance	Attendance Rate
GED or Equivalent / Interested in Post-Secondary Education	10	8	80%
Post-Secondary Student	18	11	61%
Restored Citizen	12	14	116%
Some-College Completed	12	9	75%
Unemployed citizens	12	8	67%
Less than GED or Equivalent	43	23	53%
Total	107	73	68%

The change management team led survey development to ensure its structuring and framing of content put the end user experience front and center from start to finish. Focus groups with more than 80 volunteers helped the team understand end-user perspectives and behaviors.

Focus groups also helped the team acquire stakeholder buy-in from those directly impacted by the project: Ohioans. Their feedback drove later decisions and allowed for immediate feedback, input, and excitement from the project inception. The cross-section of Ohioan personas offered by the focus groups provided crucial data. As a result, the team recognized soon-to-be college students, education seeking adults, college-educated adults, and unemployed Ohioans as the most likely user base.

The Career Navigator project was conducted over a 52-week, hybrid Waterfall/Agile project timeline. A Human Centered Change (HCC) model was used throughout the project. It applied principles, concepts, and methods of design thinking and behavioral insights to increase focus on the human-experience of those who are affected most by change. During the testing and build phases, regular touchpoints, a governance committee of key stakeholders representing all the agencies involved provided visibility and made sure the need of Ohioans was never lost.

Test planning and data preparation processes also used stakeholder input from 13 focus groups and 5 state agencies to get inside the minds of Ohioans. More than 40 testing participants acted as the various Ohioan personas, leading to smooth SIT and UAT phases that reflected real-world use. Testers completed approximately 150 test runs. Performance testing on 100 concurrent users reassured the team that Ohioans would have a good user experience even during peak usage. Those completing the survey were met with lightning-fast survey results, the tool usually taking about two seconds to load their curated results journey and resources.

Tireless and constant communication, coordination, and dedication by the DAS operations team and Deloitte testing and OCM teams is now providing platinum tier tools to aid Ohioans in their educational and professional endeavors. The Career Navigator functions as an entry point into the career advancement search for Ohioans. It cross-references input from the user with user personas and related information housed on other state agency sites. Then, it displays the most relevant information to aid the user searching for education or job advancement opportunities.

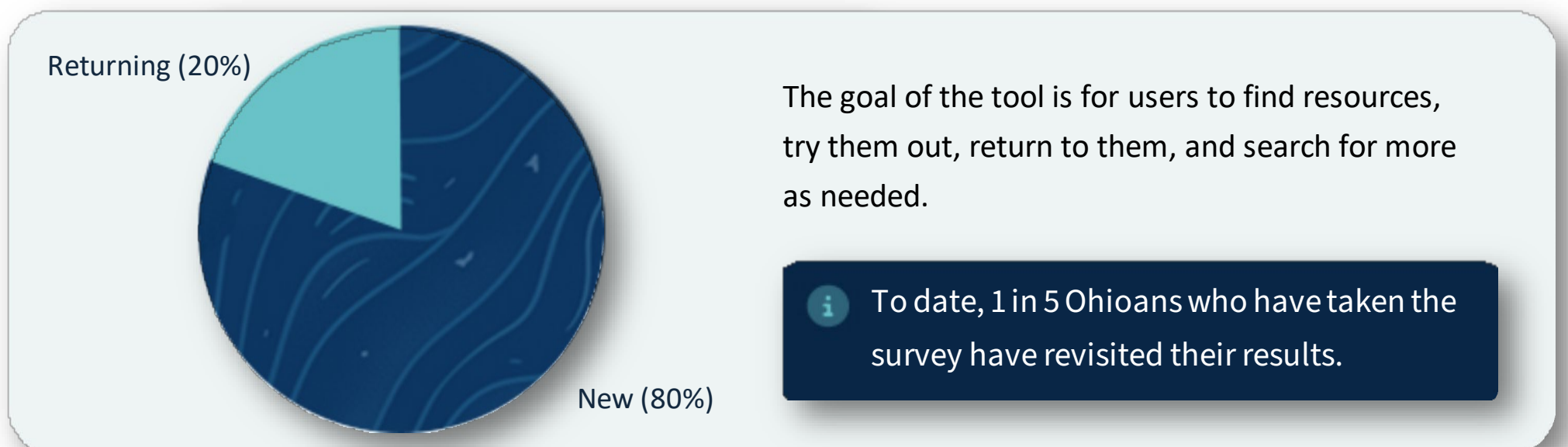
IMPACT

The Career Navigator tool can serve as a GPS for Ohioans exploring educational and career opportunities. With Career Navigator, Ohio has taken personalized and intuitive customer journeys to the next level to match the expectations of Ohioans.

Despite being in operation just two months, people are using the Career Navigator and seeing results. Since March 5, 2024, more than 100,000 people have visited the OMJ site for help or resources and over 16,000 Ohioans have completed the Career Navigator survey. While 16% of visitors taking immediate action does not immediately jump off the page, it represents a call-to-action response rate that is considerably higher than industry benchmarks. Median call-to-action rates in the public sector are around 2.92% and average click rates for career and employment resources are around 5.93%, based on recent industry research*. Even more impressive, 95 percent of those who began the Career Navigator survey completed it through to the final recommendations.



* "What's A Good CTA Click-Through Rate?" by Dan Soldner. Vye. Jan 2024
vye.agency/whats-a-good-call-to-action-click-through-rate



From March 5th through the 8th, the Career Navigator partners and other state entities promoted the new tool. They used existing resources to obtain coverage from 13 different news outlets across the state. Further, all partners promoted the tool on their social media accounts with incredibly responsive and positive reactions. During those first four days, Career Navigator saw more than 10,000 visitors and 13,000 page views and, most importantly, more than 1,700 completed career surveys.

An equally important impact of the Career Navigator project has been its role in formalizing and strengthening partnerships between state and local level organizations devoted to providing employment and education resources. The team also worked to minimize impact to any single entity by preparing all customer support points to handle increased interest in the related programs and services. As a result, partners responded to general inquiries with ease and had a clear process and infrastructure for escalation of issues. No issues were reported throughout the hyper-care period.

What Now:

These valuable collaborations with state partners, local partners, and Ohioans will continue. The Career Navigator launch is just the first step on a journey toward serving Ohioans in an evolved and tailored way. The original focus groups laid the groundwork for additional feedback sessions to evolve the tool and to foster the desired relationships between the state and all Ohioans. We continue to study user traffic patterns to direct future outreach to maximize impact on the targeted audiences. Discussions have begun around the next release to potentially include valuable enhancements such as:

- ✓ An immediate feedback loop through a "Contact us" option;
- ✓ A review and focus on increasing the number of personas using the tool providing more tailored curated results; and
- ✓ Improving the user interface via options like gamification to pinpoint where users are on their journey and incentivize continued engagement with state services.