

Where Are We Now: Addressing Ohio's Accounting Talent Shortage



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Executive Summary

In November 2023, the Ohio Society of CPAs (OSCPA) issued a perspective on addressing Ohio's accounting talent shortage. That perspective introduced an action plan containing the following five pillars:



The perspective included specific goals and desired outcomes for each pillar, established through a systematic participatory research approach conducted over a six-month period.

PILLAR	GOAL	EVIDENCE
1 COLLABORATION	Establish a well-resourced and highly connected industry sector partnership to manage Ohio's accounting workforce talent strategy.	Timely execution of the Ohio Accounting Talent Action Plan.
2 MESSAGING	Deploy a strategic storytelling strategy (what, where, how, by whom) to shift the perception of the accounting profession, driving engagement from our most critical stakeholders toward refilling the accounting pipeline.	More individuals exploring careers in accounting; coverage that elevates the industry; and a measurable and positive shift in the conversation.
3 CURRICULUM	Increase attraction to the accounting profession by providing engaging educational experiences that accurately reflect the work of accounting professionals.	Increase in students completing accounting pathways (i.e., matriculation) and pursuing CPA licensing.
4 WORK EXPERIENCE	Increase attraction to and retention in the accounting profession by providing meaningful work experiences and desirable work cultures.	Increase in accounting career exploration, matriculation, and retention within the profession.
5 PATHWAYS	Remove unnecessary barriers to entry and increase opportunities for individuals to pursue accounting careers and CPA licensing.	Increase in candidates eligible for and pursuing CPA licensing.

Using input from stakeholders and research insights, a set of key activities was defined for each pillar, and detailed action plans were created. The action plans reflected short-term (up to 1 year), medium-term (1-3 years) and long-term (3-5 years) goals. Eighteen months after launching this action plan, OSCPAs has made significant progress across four pillars and has begun executing the long-term goals.

Where We Are Now: Addressing Ohio's Accounting Talent Shortage



SECTION 1.0 INDUSTRY SECTOR PARTNERSHIP (COLLABORATION)

- 1.1 Formalize Sector Partnership:** Formalize Ohio's accounting industry sector partnership as the collaborative that will manage the accounting workforce strategy.
- 1.2 Develop Accounting Workforce Strategy:** Develop a comprehensive accounting workforce strategy inclusive of key stakeholders across the talent pipeline continuum.
- 1.3 Secure Funding to Execute Strategy:** Develop and implement a funding strategy to resource the talent action plan.
- 1.4 Coordinate Across Partners:** Establish operational systems to coordinate activities across the state leveraging existing infrastructure as much as possible.



SECTION 2.0 MESSAGING

- 2.1 Forge A Changed Story:** Forge our most meaningful story - authentic, aspirational, relevant and memorable - and create a toolkit with the differentiating messages, authentic storylines and tools to bring this story to life for all audiences.
- 2.2 Change Where And How The Story Is Told:** Create a multi-pronged PR + marketing strategy, that is research-based, data-backed and includes a holistic blend of paid, earned, owned, and shared media to create conversations, and grow and drive action with our audiences.
- 2.3 Change Who Is Telling It:** As part of this strategy, leverage influencers to bust myths, change the conversation, amplify our storylines and reach our Gen Z, Millennial AND Gen X audiences.
- 2.4 Amplify What's Good, While We Change What's Not:** While we work to create congruency, we will seek and pitch stories of accountants/CPA's evolving experiences, curriculum and business opportunities, and craft compelling testimonials and case studies and amplify with SEO.



SECTION 3.0 CURRICULUM

- 3.1 Resource Faculty:** Equip high-school and post-secondary faculty with resources that accurately portray accounting careers and the nature of work for use in introductory and upper-level business and accounting courses.
- 3.2 Develop Experiential Learning:** Engage with career education leaders to pilot high school courses and accounting and finance academies that incorporate experiential learning elements.
- 3.3 Educate Career Influencers:** Educate career counselors, career centers, and families on careers in accounting, aptitude requirements, and the (simplified) pathways to achieving career success.
- 3.4 Elevate Accounting Careers:** Incorporate accounting courses and programs into other pathways and link to STEM-oriented fields.



SECTION 4.0 EXPERIENCE

- 4.1 Redefine Work Experience:** Create unified vision of the future of work in the accounting profession that has the commitment of key leaders to make the changes necessary to realize the vision.
- 4.2 Counteract Work Compression:** Identify, develop, and deploy strategies to counteract work compression that leads to unreasonable work demands and burnout.
- 4.3 Support Firms in Transitioning Business Model:** Offer resources, knowledge, and networking opportunities that support firms undertaking organizational change initiatives to transition business models to align with employee work expectations.
- 4.4 Help Employers Redefine Career Progression:** Engage employers in rethinking succession planning and career development to support long-tenured accounting careers.



SECTION 5.0 PATHWAYS

- 5.1 Establish Pathways Framework:** Create a pathways framework that clearly denotes existing and desired future pathways that enable multiple entry points into the accounting profession and expands access to talent sources.
- 5.2 Remove Pathway Barriers:** Remove unnecessary barriers to entry and progression in the accounting profession included in existing pathways.
- 5.3 Create Accounting Apprenticeship Model:** Establish a registerable apprenticeship pathway(s) to create an entry ramp for talent not interested in or situationally able to pursue the traditional 4/5-year college pathway.

OSCPA's progress on these action plans was only possible through partnership. Over the past 18 months, OSCP has been working diligently to build relationships, align our workforce development initiatives with Ohio's infrastructure, and address the noted issues. To further support the expansion of relationships, a new visual was created. This visual summarizes two targeted outcomes: accounting career readiness and CPA eligibility, and the critical work occurring in each pillar. This updated framework will continue to guide OSCP's workforce development efforts for the next 2-3 years.

Where We Are Now: Addressing Ohio's Accounting Talent Shortage



As OSCPA has built relationships, the need to update the Talent Action Plan in response to lessons learned became obvious. This updated plan provides a snapshot of our current status and outlines our next steps. The key takeaways in the plan are:

1. There is power in collaboration. As our coalition continues to grow, new partnership opportunities emerge. Each new partnership expands our reach in K-12, post-secondary, and regional workforce talent pools.
2. Changing perceptions takes time. Our messaging efforts, while showing initial success, must continue and expand to reach more career influencers.
3. Students want to be intellectually challenged. To meet this expectation, accounting curricula should maintain academic rigor while being presented in a manner that fosters student engagement.
4. The state's emphasis on work-based learning will challenge us to rethink work experience in the accounting profession. We will need to innovate to determine how we can make more

Where We Are Now: Addressing Ohio's Accounting Talent Shortage

accounting opportunities available for high school and community college students. These innovations will also require us to reexamine our work environments.

5. Passing the CPA Exam is about more than study time and access to exam preparation materials. We need to address the mental and emotional needs of CPA Exam candidates, particularly in areas such as community, stress management, and encouragement.

Over the next 2-3 years, we aspire to make significant progress in the work experience pillar while continuing to build upon the successes experienced in collaboration, messaging, curriculum, and pathways. Numerous opportunities and challenges lie ahead: our business environment is turbulent, demographic headwinds still lie ahead of us, and the talent competition grows ever fiercer. Despite all these challenges, we have a compelling story to tell and it's beginning to be heard. We can introduce the K-12 community to new curricula that better reflect the work accountants actually do and engage young talent through work-based learning.

Considering the challenges and opportunities facing the profession, we ask all stakeholders to join in the conversation and in the work. We need more advocates and champions for the accounting profession. Engagement in every aspect of this effort is needed, and appreciation is extended to those who commit to attracting and developing both current and future generations of accounting talent. To get involved, visit our [workforce development page](#).

Where We Are Now: Addressing Ohio's Accounting Talent Shortage

18 Months Later: A Snapshot

Collaboration

The Ohio Accounting Talent Network (OATN) recognizes that a strong accounting workforce is foundational to Ohio's economic growth, underpinning the financial health and operational efficiency of most every industry across the state. The accounting talent shortage affects industries statewide—including manufacturing, healthcare, information technology, and financial services—making accounting professionals essential to both immediate workforce needs and Ohio's long-term economic resilience. By addressing this talent gap in collaboration with other industry sector partnerships, we aim to strengthen the economic infrastructure that enables Ohio businesses to expand and thrive.

The mission, vision, and guiding framework of the OATN – an industry-sector partnership created specifically to address Ohio's accounting talent shortage – were developed based upon collective input from employer members gathered through a series of engagements over an 18-month period. Much has happened since that time.



In November 2023, the OATN was officially launched. Organizations signed commitment letters as evidence of their willingness to support the coalition's efforts. To date, 58 organizations and individuals have officially joined the coalition, with additional commitments pending. Each organization has at least one coalition representative who serves as the primary point of contact for communication. Organizations can opt into the five working committees of the coalition. These working committees meet three to four times a year.



In January 2025, the OATN was awarded an Industry Sector Partnership (ISP) Spark Grant to support the development and delivery of messaging and curriculum. These funds supplement the Education

Where We Are Now: Addressing Ohio’s Accounting Talent Shortage

Assistance Funds budget awarded by the Accountancy Board of Ohio. The Spark Grant will enhance OATN’s outreach efforts and provide valuable educational resources, further strengthening Ohio’s accounting talent pipeline. The Spark grant includes a match requirement so OATN must secure \$25,000 in workforce development funds to fully leverage the award.

In March 2025, a refined stakeholder engagement strategy was developed to guide resource allocation as the network expands. For the purposes of this plan, Ohio’s economic development regions have been classified into three tiers based on the current level of engagement and connectivity.

Tier 1 zones: The most engaged and connected, with robust representation in the coalition, participation in student programs, and willingness to partner on workforce development innovations. Northeast, Northwest, and Central Ohio are Tier 1 zones. Stakeholder engagement roundtables will be the strategic focus for these zones.

Tier 2 zones: A more moderate level of engagement, and could benefit from additional investment in relationship building and connecting with the existing workforce development infrastructure. West and Southwest Ohio are Tier 2 zones. Listening/visioning sessions will be the strategic focus for these zones.

Tier 3 zones: Lowest level of engagement and connectivity. These zones will require additional research and basic networking to identify the right leverage points before listening/visioning sessions can occur. Ohio’s Southeast region falls within this zone.

Partnerships are essential to achieving workforce development outcomes, as they foster collaboration, innovation, and resource sharing across diverse sectors. By bringing together educational institutions, industry leaders, and workforce development organizations, these partnerships ensure that the pathways into accounting careers are clear, accessible, and aligned with the needs of both students and employers.

The table below highlights key partnerships that contribute to the success of our workforce development initiatives, each focused on addressing critical areas such as career exploration, work-based learning, and integrating accounting into K-12 curricula. Organizations like BPA and DECA help us engage high school students in career-connected learning activities. The Educational Service Centers (Ohio has 51 of them) function as a key conduit for integrating new curriculum into middle school and high school career exploration and career planning. Local and regional economic development partners such as Team NEO and the Greater Cleveland Partnership enable scalability through resource innovations. Separately, each partner plays a vital role in connecting students with the resources, mentorships, and real-world experiences necessary for a successful career in accounting. Collectively, these statewide partnerships create a robust ecosystem that supports the growth of the accounting talent pipeline in Ohio.

Organization	Partnership Focus
BPA	Connecting high school students and educators with a business focus to accounting careers and resources
Career Connected Learning Coalition	The coalition was formed to focus on improving the classroom-to-career connection. The coalition has focused on five pillars: middle school exploration, work-based learning, in-demand credentials, expanding career-technical education, and workforce outcomes. The work of OATN aligns with this coalition’s focus.
DECA	Connecting high school students and educators with a business focus to accounting careers and resources
Educational Services Center of Central Ohio (ESCCO)	Accounting resources in K-12 curriculum, accounting pre-apprenticeships, high-school (accounting) tech internships, ISP collaborative. ESCCO convenes Ohio’s ISPs quarterly to identify key workforce attraction initiatives that can be undertaken collectively. The OATN is linked to ESCCO’s ISP collaborative website, which

Where We Are Now: Addressing Ohio's Accounting Talent Shortage

	increases accounting's visibility with the K-12 districts served by ESCCO. https://www.escoco.org/IndustrySectorPartnerships.aspx
Educational Services Center of Northeast Ohio (ESCNO)	Helping districts leverage accounting resources in K-12 curriculum, accounting pre-apprenticeships, introduction to finance (career cluster) course.
Greater Cleveland Career Consortium (GCCC)	Engage with this group of public, private, educational, and non-profit organizations to help students in the region explore accounting as a career option. Partner on financial services pre-apprenticeship program.
Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP)	Key supporter for GCCC, partnering on work-based learning, including accounting internships and pre-apprenticeships. GCP, in partnership with Team NEO and Deloitte, is a primary sponsor of the financial services pre-apprenticeship program currently in development with input from OSCPA on behalf of the OATN.
Insuring Ohio's Future	ISP focused on insurance careers, including accounting. Partnering with OATN specific to insurance accounting careers
Intuit	Intuit financial literacy resources and certifications in the accounting toolkit/curriculum
Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (ODEW)	Connecting K-12 educators to accounting resources available for classroom use
Team NEO	Economic development arm, partnering with GCP and GCCC
Young Entrepreneur's Institute	Entrepreneurship educational resources in the accounting toolkit

More collaborative partnerships are required to accomplish our goals, but we are on the right path. Over the next 2-3 years, we will continue to grow coalition membership and workforce development partnerships.

The key metrics we track for this pillar are:

- # of coalition member organizations
- # of academic organizations
- # of corporate employer organizations
- # of government employer organizations
- # of public accounting employer organizations
- # of other organizations

To see the most current list of coalition members (updated quarterly), please visit our [workforce development page](#).

Where We Are Now: Addressing Ohio's Accounting Talent Shortage

Messaging

Analysis conducted by Edge Research on behalf of the Center for Audit Quality (CAQ) confirms that the accounting profession does indeed have an image problem – one that must be addressed to attract more students to careers in accounting. A coordinated messaging and image campaign is needed to begin shifting outdated perceptions and combat misinformation. At the student level, OSCP partners with the CAQ on its Accounting+ campaign.

In December 2024, OSCP launched *Look Beyond*, an integrated communications campaign to reshape perceptions of the accounting profession. The campaign features a branded website, targeted social media messaging, thought leadership media placement, and strategic public speaking engagements. *Look Beyond* is designed to foster a sense of pride and belonging, while clearly outlining an accessible pathway into the profession.



Changing Perception Around Skills and Career Value

It is essential that the target audience understands the importance of the accounting profession in addition to its stakeholders, core values and future direction – particularly amid the widespread integration of artificial intelligence. Accounting professionals should be seen as the dynamic business strategists, effective collaborators, and trusted relationship-builders that they are.

Essential Skills CPAs Use:



Career influencers need to dispel the myths about who accountants are and what they do. Specifically, we need parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and others involved in students' career planning to realize that accountants are not math wizards; rather, they possess strong analytical skills, effective communication skills, and are technologically savvy. Accountants ask good questions about the data and see stories where others simply see numbers. Furthermore, accountants are at the heart of business – rendering advice, verifying data and reports, and interpreting laws. They are not stuck in a dark cubicle, behind large piles of paper, crunching numbers all day, and their careers are not limited to completing tax returns.

Where We Are Now: Addressing Ohio's Accounting Talent Shortage

Traits of Successful CPAs:



Tech-Savvy



Ethical



Organized



Strategic Thinker



Curious



Adaptable

Accounting careers offer varied opportunities, with no single pathway to success. Individuals can align personal passions with accounting expertise to create customized careers. Accountants frequently serve as strategic partners to entrepreneurs – and often become entrepreneurs themselves.

High School and College Students

The *Look Beyond* website for high school students asks the question, “Why choose a CPA Career”, and then responds with brief bullets that talk about how CPAs earn more, are in high demand, have job security, work flexibility, and job growth. Students are encouraged to discover what is possible and explore limitless opportunities.

Explore Limitless Possibilities

CPAs don't just follow the rules—they create them. They are leaders, innovators, and influencers who use their expertise to drive change across industries. With a CPA credential, you can open doors to opportunities you've only imagined.



Forensic Accounting:

Solve financial crimes and bring integrity to high-stakes investigations



Corporate Entertainment:

Guide movie studios and production companies in managing budgets and royalty distribution behind the scenes



International Accounting:

Travel the world while helping global companies navigate international tax laws and exchange rates



IT and Data Analytics:

Be a tech innovator, leveraging data analytics and cloud technology to solve complex financial problems



Sports Team Accounting:

Combine your love of sports with financial leadership, managing payrolls and budgets for professional teams



Entrepreneurship:

Start and lead your own business using your financial expertise to drive innovation and success

Parents and Educators

Parents and teachers are encouraged to chart a path to success for their students by building a strong foundation. They are provided with easy access to tools that will equip students with practical skills and a clear vision. Student success stories are readily available, as is information on accounting careers and potential earnings.

A Future-Proof Career for Ohio's Youth

Ohio's accounting, finance and business sectors are set for significant growth by 2030. Now is the time to prepare the next generation of leaders. As financial technologies advance and small business opportunities expand, the need for skilled professionals—like CPAs, financial analysts and auditors—continues to grow. These career paths offer students stability, growth and a chance to shape the future.



Accounting & Auditing

Over 50,000 professionals will be employed by 2030, earning a median salary of \$85,000.



Treasurers & Controllers

These leaders in financial planning are expected to see a 16% growth, with median salaries of \$131,610.



Financial Examiners

Expected 19% growth by 2030, with a median salary of \$66,620.



Entrepreneurship

With over 148,000 small business applications in Ohio in 2023 alone, the potential for entrepreneurs with strong accounting foundations is limitless.

Where We Are Now: Addressing Ohio's Accounting Talent Shortage

Career Changers

The *Look Beyond* messaging helps ease the anxiety sometimes associated with career transitions by emphasizing that career changers often possess valuable, transferable skills that can serve as a strong foundation for a future CPA career.



Communication

Simplify complex financial concepts for clients and stakeholders.



Problem Solving

Bring creativity to tackle challenges and develop effective solutions for businesses and individuals.



Tech-Savvy

Adapt quickly to new software and data analysis tools, staying ahead in a digital world.



Attention to Detail

Ensure accuracy in financial reports and compliance—critical skills in the CPA field.

Thought Leadership

OSCPA is committed to publishing insightful commentary and analysis that highlights the positive attributes of the profession and elevates national awareness to the accounting talent shortage. Some of the thought leadership pieces published as part of the *Look Beyond* campaign include:

- [Five Things You Need to Create a Highly Successful Career in the Accounting Industry \(Authority Magazine\)](#)
- [Look Beyond: Why a CPA Career is Anything But Ordinary \(National MAT release\)](#)
- [Ohio Society of CPA's ramping up efforts to tackle growing accounting workforce shortage \(Columbus Business First\)](#)

The *Look Beyond* campaign will only achieve its full potential if our coalition members start to engage with and share the message, and if we stay at it. Consistent messaging over an extended period is required to truly shift perception within the career influencer group. That group will be our hardest to reach.

Key Metrics

- # of educators reached
- Newsletter engagement – open rate
- Newsletter engagement – click rate
- Website traffic unique users
- Users who download resources

Curriculum

A robust messaging campaign is insufficient and counterproductive if the accounting curriculum is not aligned or is not available. Ohio Excels is a coalition founded in 2018 by Ohio business leaders with a singular focus: to help improve and transform Ohio's education system to better prepare students for success. This coalition has identified three essentials for career success: career-connected learning, college credit in high school, and post-secondary affordability and completion.

In its "Reality Check" whitepaper, Ohio Excels projects that by 2031, Ohio can expect to have 645,000 job openings annually due to new positions, retirements, and other workforce transitions – bringing the state's total number of jobs to an estimated 5,576,000. About 66% of those jobs will require post-secondary education after high school. However, only 52.5% (as of 2022) of working-age adults have a post-secondary degree or credential. Compounding the issue, Ohio's K-12 student population has

Where We Are Now: Addressing Ohio's Accounting Talent Shortage

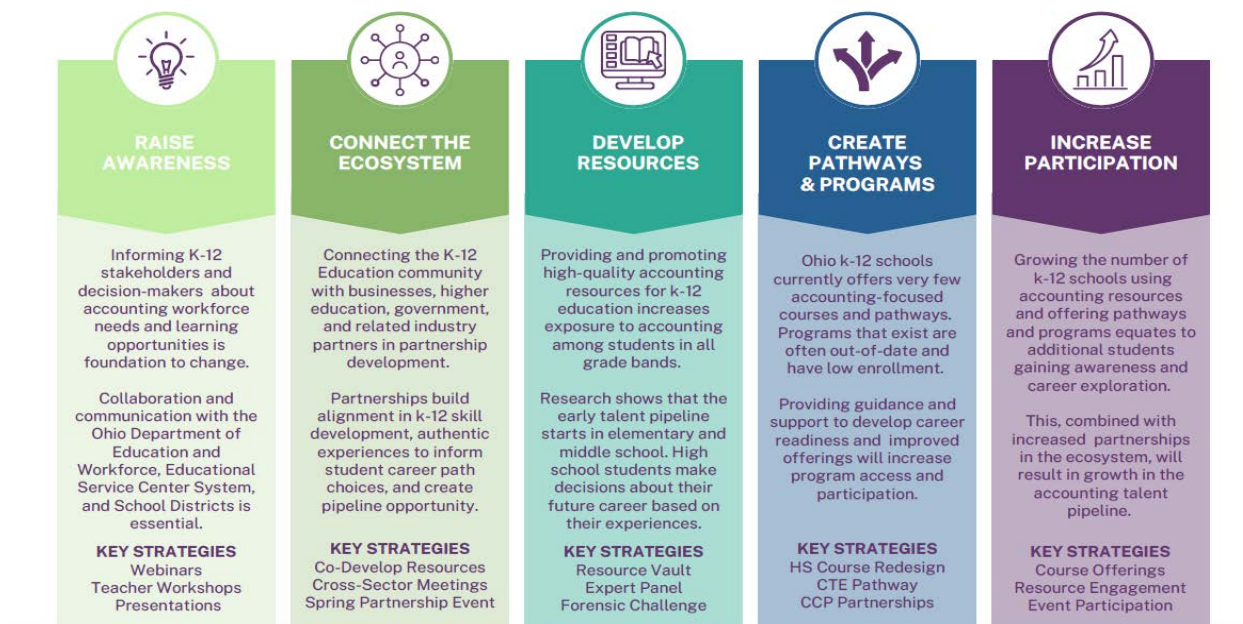
decreased over the past two decades due to broad demographic changes and migration trends. These trends affect all industry sectors, but not all sectors have an organized approach to addressing the issue. Healthcare, manufacturing, and information technology have long-standing coalitions that continue to broaden their presence in Ohio's K-12 educational institutions. For Ohio's accounting workforce, this means three things:

- 1) Talent competition is fierce and will get fiercer
- 2) Active career development at the secondary education level is critical
- 3) The accounting profession is already behind

Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (ODEW) developed a career connections framework to assist districts with planning student curricula. The career-connected framework separates career readiness into three stages: career awareness, career exploration, and career planning. Career awareness is the primary focus for elementary grades K-5; career exploration begins in middle grades 6-8; and high school grades 9-12 emphasize career planning. Although portrayed as sequentially occurring, in reality, the stages are often iterative, with students cycling through the stages at each grade level (elementary, middle school, and high school) and progressing between the stages at varying speeds. Leveraging our knowledge of the career-connected framework and our workforce development pillars, a K-12 early talent pipeline strategy was developed, as reflected in the visual.

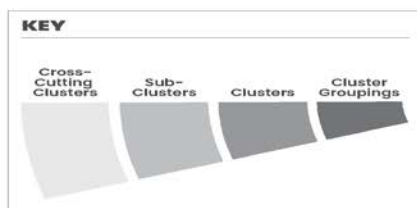
K-12 Education Early Talent Pipeline Strategy

FROM CLASSROOM TO ACCOUNTING CAREERS



Within the K-12 space, the career curriculum must align with the pathways established in the career cluster wheel. Any career cluster can draw from or integrate with competencies and skills identified in the connection and supporting success career clusters. Accounting sits within the financial services career cluster, along with banking and credit, financial strategies and investments, insurance, and real estate. It can integrate with management & entrepreneurship, marketing & sales, or digital technology. Our curriculum plan complies with this framework.

Where We Are Now: Addressing Ohio's Accounting Talent Shortage



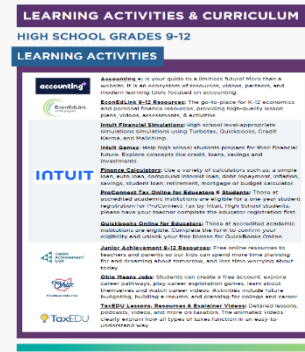
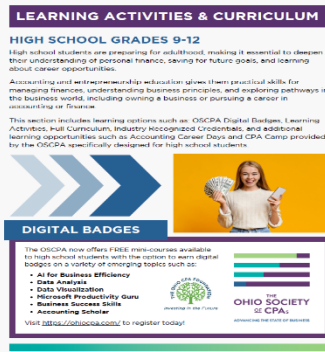
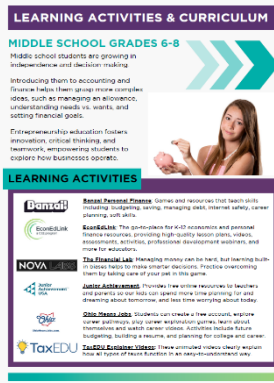
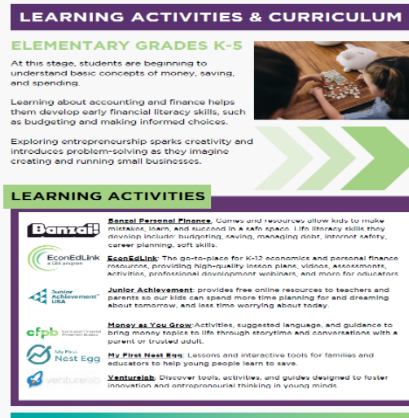
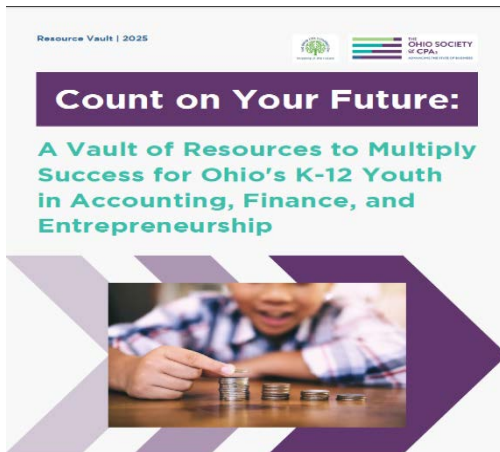
The Vault

To support K-12 educators across all grade levels, OSCP created an accounting Vault. This Vault was published in December 2024 and will be updated and republished each fall. The OSCP Vault is comprised of three key components that help facilitate K-12 career education and outreach focused on accounting, finance, and entrepreneurship:

1. **Free Webinars & Workshops:** The toolkit includes opportunities for educators to engage in no-cost virtual learning to stay current on high-quality resources, hear from industry experts on topics such as sought-after job skills, the impact of technology on job openings and hiring, and bright outlook careers. An interactive workshop for educators will be offered to redesign and modernize secondary accounting courses with credentials, college credit, and graduation seals.
2. **Learning Activities & Curriculum:** Access standards-aligned lesson plans, digital tools, and engaging online activities that bring accounting, finance, and entrepreneurship to life in the classroom. The toolkit will have curated free resources organized by grade level and designation of learning activity or full curriculum. The learning activities and curriculum will be scalable, flexible, and modular, providing innovative and revised program and curriculum guidance for secondary programs.

Where We Are Now: Addressing Ohio's Accounting Talent Shortage

3. **Career Connections:** The toolkit also enables educators to discover exciting and sustainable career pathways, as well as suggested activities to explore and plan for a bright and secure future. Students will learn about career opportunities and the sizable future growth predicted in accounting and related fields in Ohio, get connected with student programs such as ACD and CPA CAMP, and have easily accessible links to request classroom visits or other connections with accounting professionals.



Where We Are Now: Addressing Ohio's Accounting Talent Shortage

LEARNING ACTIVITIES & CURRICULUM
HIGH SCHOOL GRADES 9-12
INDUSTRY RECOGNIZED CREDENTIALS

Ohio Department of Education & Workforce

Connecting students to opportunities to earn Industry-Recognized Credentials helps put them on the pathway to graduation and success beyond high school. Examples include the following credentials in accounting, finance, and entrepreneurship with more added each year.

- Intuit Certified Bookkeeper (CB):** Nationally recognized certification that validates bookkeeping skills (3 points).
- Intuit QuickBooks Certified User:** Industry-recognized certification for students proficient in QuickBooks (3 points).
- Entrepreneurship and Small Business (ES&B) Certification:** Credential for aspiring young entrepreneurs (3 points).
- Microsoft Office Specialist** (choose from options such as Excel, Powerpoint, Outlook, Word, etc.) (3 points each).
- RISE Up Retail Certification:** Credentials for Industry Fundamentals, Business of Retail, Customer Service and Sales (6 points each).
- Tableau Desktop Certified Associate:** Learn how to make business decisions by understanding the business problem, identifying data to explore for analysis, and delivering actionable insights (4 points).
- Certified Intuit Design for Delight:** This certification helps individuals validate their knowledge of design thinking principles and the tools needed to identify problems, gain customer empathy, brainstorm solutions, run experiments, test assumptions, pivot, and much more (1 point).

These credentials provide students with valuable skills that will help them excel in their careers. For more information and additional credentials, please visit the [Ohio Department of Education and Workforce Industry-Recognized Credential page](#).

12

Free Webinar Example #1: Expert Panel - Careers in Accounting

This webinar, recorded on January 30, 2025, featured a diverse group of industry leaders offering valuable insights into the various career paths within the accounting profession. Panelists included a seasoned corporate accountant, who discussed the role of accounting professionals within large organizations, a forensic accountant from public accounting, who shared expertise in financial investigations and fraud detection, and an experienced accounting professor, who provided an academic perspective on the skills and education required to succeed in the field. Together, these experts offered a well-rounded view of the diverse career opportunities in the accounting profession, lessons learned, and advice for career success. The panelists also provided their perspective on the role of artificial intelligence in the accounting profession. This webinar is accessible to K-12 educators for use in the classroom from OSCPA's YouTube Channel and the Look Beyond website.

Free Webinar Example # 2: High School Accounting Course Enhancement

This webinar, recorded on March 6, 2025, was designed to help educators align student learning with current workforce needs by discussing the growth of accounting careers in Ohio, the essential skills and traits needed to succeed in the profession, and the latest pathway options to becoming a CPA, including updates on state requirements. The webinar also provides information about OSCPA's free resources, such as CPA Summer Camps, classroom visits, and business success skills courses, all designed to engage students in accounting. Additionally, the session focuses on the opportunities available to high school students, including competitions like the HS Forensic Accounting Challenge and the resources available through OSCPA's K-12 Resource Vault. Educators will have the opportunity to build upon this 1-hour webinar with an all-day workshop on June 23, 2025.

Free Webinar Example # 3: The Future of Accounting and AI

This free webinar will be designed and recorded during the summer of 2025 for use by K-12 educators during the 2025-2026 school year. This webinar will introduce K-12 students to the exciting intersection of technology and the accounting profession. It will explore how artificial intelligence (AI) is already being leveraged in accounting, from automating routine tasks like data entry to enhancing decision-making through advanced data analytics. The webinar will highlight real-world examples of AI in

Where We Are Now: Addressing Ohio's Accounting Talent Shortage

accounting, such as AI-powered tools that help accountants analyze financial data, detect fraud, and improve accuracy. Additionally, the session will look ahead at how AI is expected to shape future accounting careers, emphasizing the growing importance of technology skills alongside traditional accounting knowledge. By showcasing how technology is transforming the accounting field, the webinar aims to inspire students to consider how AI and accounting are becoming increasingly intertwined and to encourage them to explore future opportunities in this dynamic and evolving profession. This resource is intended for educators to play in the classroom, providing students with a clear understanding of the role of AI in accounting and its impact on the workforce.

Learning Curriculum Example # 1: Center for Audit Quality (CAQ)/EverFi

The CAQ partners with EverFi to develop curriculum that exposes students to careers in accounting. OSCP has partnered with CAQ to bring the EverFi curriculum into more Ohio high schools and to bring CPAs into the classroom through CAQ's Classroom Connect program. EverFi curriculum is included in the Accounting Vault of resources.

Forensic Accounting Challenge

The Ohio High School Forensic Accounting Virtual Challenge offered students the opportunity to dive into real-world evidence, follow the money trail, and collaborate to solve a multi-million-dollar fraud case. This exciting and free challenge allows participants to step into the shoes of a forensic accountant, using their skills to uncover the truth behind financial crimes. The initial pilot of the challenge ran from February 6th to April 1st and was open to all Ohio high school students. The challenge provided a hands-on experience in forensic accounting while promoting an exciting career path in this specialized field. The challenge will be revised during the summer for relaunch in the fall during Fraud Awareness Week.

The graphic is a promotional flyer for the Ohio High School Forensic Accounting Virtual Challenge. It features a purple header with the title 'Ohio High School Forensic Accounting VIRTUAL CHALLENGE'. To the right is the logo for 'THE OHIO CPA FOUNDATION' with the tagline 'Investing in the Future'. The main body is divided into two columns. The left column, on a purple background, contains an icon of a magnifying glass over a document and text asking if the reader is 'Ready to crack the case?' and describing the challenge as a multi-million-dollar fraud case. The right column, on a green background, features a QR code and text stating 'FREE REGISTRATION! Starts February 6th' and providing a registration link: 'https://tinyurl.com/RegisterFACChallenge' with a due date of 'Due April 1st'. Below these columns, a blue banner lists 'PRIZES \$100 Gift Cards For Top 3 Teams!'. At the bottom, a purple banner says 'Special thanks to this year's challenge development partners:' followed by logos for the Ohio Auditor of State Keith Faber, Schneider Downs (Big Thinking. Personal Focus.), Perry Forensic, Franklin University, and the Ohio Society of CPAs.

Additional challenges will be developed in 2025 and 2026 to continue to engage students in real-world scenarios representative of the broad array of work done by accountants. These challenges will require critical thinking and problem-solving at a level commiserate with the profession. However, our experience shows that students are up to the challenge.

Key Metrics

- # high school students reached
- # of students reached
- # of K-12 facilities reached
- # of K-12 educators reached
- # post-secondary intro to accounting faculty reached
- # of downloads of toolkits
- # of boot camp programs offered

Where We Are Now: Addressing Ohio's Accounting Talent Shortage

- # of students reached regarding boot camp programs
- Demographics – underrepresented students reached
- Perception of accounting amongst boot camp participants

Curriculum resources can be accessed at the [Look Beyond](#) section of our website.

Work Experience

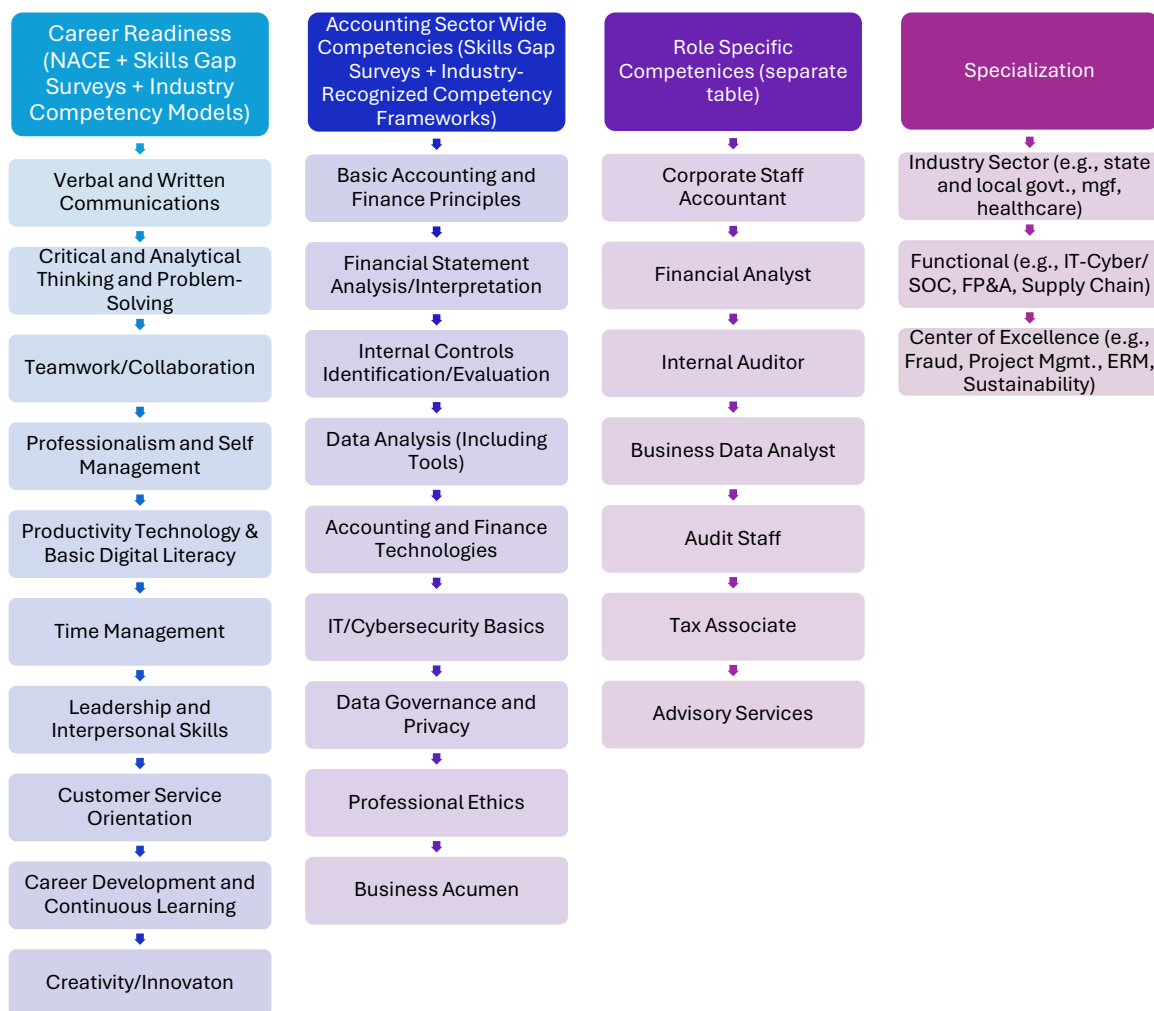
Federal law defines work-based learning (WBL) as “sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real workplace settings, to the extent practicable, or simulated environments at an educational institution that fosters in-depth, firsthand engagement with the tasks required in a given career field, that are aligned to curriculum and instruction.” WBL experiences are conducted at a work site during or after school. They are designed to provide authentic learning experiences to students that link academic, technical, and professional skills. Business and education partners work together to evaluate and supervise the experience, which must be documented with learning agreements.

A single WBL framework does not currently exist. However, the PACE framework is a WBL- approach developed by the Greater Cleveland Career Consortium (GCCC), a consortium of more than 140 cross-sector community members, to serve as a guide for school systems to design and implement a sixth through twelfth-grade student experience of embedded in-class activities, out-of-school engagements, and career advising. GCC's goal for developing the PACE framework was to create meaningful ways for students to engage with employers and community partners. The four components of the PACE framework are:

- Self-knowledge and self-awareness
- Career awareness and career exploration
- Active career planning and decision-making; and
- Work-and career-based learning.

As the framework is adopted in K-12 settings, the accounting profession must participate or risk being sidelined right when interest in the profession is beginning to grow. The initiatives in the work experience pillar are supported by OSCP's competency framework, developed in April and May 2024 through consultation with OATN coalition members and workforce development specialists. This framework looks at the key career readiness skills that would help students successfully engage with and progress in accounting careers. Further revision of this framework is expected as pre-apprenticeship models are launched and collaborative activities with other industry sector partnerships are solidified.

Where We Are Now: Addressing Ohio's Accounting Talent Shortage



The middle school and high school programs under development will equip students with foundational skills to succeed in a post-secondary accounting program. In addition to the noted career readiness skills, these programs will focus on core business skills (e.g., business acumen, data analysis) and accounting technology. Participants will receive assistance in developing their LinkedIn profiles and receive a digital badge for program completion. The programs will meet Ohio's definition of pre-apprenticeship programs, which includes classroom instruction, career connected learning, work-based learning, industry curriculum alignment, and wraparound services.

The knowledge and understanding objectives noted for these new pre-apprenticeship programs are still being defined. However, these pre-apprenticeship programs will leverage the learning outcomes defined for the existing Ohio-registered accounting technician apprenticeship program as a starting point. Modification is expected to occur to integrate the use of digital technology in bookkeeping, data entry, and data analysis (e.g., AI tools, PowerBI, and Plateau).

The desired skills will be developed through a mix of work-based learning strategies as defined by career-connected learning agencies, including:

- Coursework/Industry projects: teachers will collaborate with industry to integrate specific, authentic industry tasks into the curriculum. See discussions under the Vault and the Forensic Accounting Challenge components within the curriculum section for actions already in progress for this work-based learning strategy.

Where We Are Now: Addressing Ohio's Accounting Talent Shortage

- Career-focused competitions: Industry partners will mentor and coach students as they explore careers and prepare for task-based competitions in various knowledge areas. These partners will also judge presentations or competitions and provide constructive feedback regarding student mastery of targeted skills or competencies. BPA, DECA, Skills USA, and FBLA host student competitions that include Accounting, Business Ethics, Business Law, and related fields of study.
- On-the-job paid work: Industry partners will provide opportunities for students to experience the work environment, develop employability skills, and gain direct exposure to careers through practicums, internships, pre-apprenticeships, and apprenticeships.

OSCPA will work with employer partners to ensure that the WBL experience meets the best practices, including:

- Well-defined job descriptions and hiring process
- Assigned mentors (may be external to the organization, e.g., through an industry association)
- Onboarding and orientation (i.e., kick-off meeting, expectations review)
- Structured reflection, critical analysis and synthesis through weekly check-ins.
- Opportunities for participants to take initiative, make decisions, and be accountable for the results.
- Opportunities for participants to engage intellectually, creatively, emotionally, socially, or physically.
- The possibility to learn from natural consequences, mistakes, and successes.
- Personalized development competency-focused development checklist
- Supportive mentoring and supervision using the competency development checklist as a guide.
- Formal close-out process

The WBL calendar will follow a school-year calendar with most activity occurring between September and May. Visioning, evaluation, and adjustment would occur in the summer months. The cycle would repeat annually. Embracing WBL will require mindset shifts as we fundamentally rethink the work environment and the potential opportunities that can be created for high school and community college students.

Key Metrics

- # of middle school and high school students reached
- # of high school students participating in work-based learning activities
- # of K-12 facilities reached
- # of K-12 educators reached

Pathways

The pathways work agenda seeks to remove unnecessary barriers to entry and increase opportunities for individuals to pursue accounting careers and CPA licensing. Work occurring through the OATN focuses on innovations in the secondary and post-secondary space seek to make accounting careers more accessible to a broader audience and change how young professionals and untapped talent make their way into the accounting profession.

Our ability to recruit individuals into these emerging pathways is dependent upon successfully changing the perception of the profession through the messaging campaign and increasing the number of students engaging in accounting career awareness and exploration activities through growing our existing student programs and developing new curriculum and work-based learning activities. In essence, our pathways work is dependent on the other elements of the plan.

Where We Are Now: Addressing Ohio's Accounting Talent Shortage

CPA Exam Preparation Materials. The preparation materials for OSCP-preferred CPA Review providers are eligible for coverage through this award. Individuals requesting CPA Exam scholarships would be required to participate in the online cohort program which adds an additional layer of support and accountability.

The Destination Ohio CPA Program, initially targeted to launch in October 2024, was launched in January 2025. Cohort 1 has 16 participants that will stay together for up to 18 months. This program is designed to support aspiring CPAs on their path to success. Whether a student or a working professional, this program provides expert guidance, top-tier study resources, and a network of peers to help individuals conquer the CPA Exam and advance their careers.

What's Included:

✓ **Collaborative Cohort Experience** – Participants connect with a supportive community of professionals, engage in discussions led by experienced CPAs, and get that extra push to stay motivated throughout their journey.

📚 **Comprehensive Exam Prep** – Participant gain access to UWorld's industry-leading CPA Exam prep materials, along with professional development resources from OSCPA's Business Success Skills Program.

✏️ **Personalized Support** – Participants create tailored study plans and engage in monthly check-ins designed to help them succeed.

Seize your path to CPA success!

Be a part of OSCPA's Destination Ohio CPA Program



PROGRAM BEGINS OCTOBER 21, 2024

- Space is limited to 30 participants
- Complimentary UWorld licenses for those without employer support
- Registration opens September 16 for program
- Live information session September 12th & replay September 25th

REGISTER FOR INFO SESSION

Over the next 2-3 years, pathways work will focus on innovating with K-12 and post-secondary partners to create additional opportunities for those interested in accounting to on-ramp in different ways based on their prior experiences. We will also continue to challenge the wrap-around support necessary to help qualified candidates successfully pass the CPA Exam.

Key Metrics

- # of middle school and high school students reached
- # of high school students participating in work-based learning activities
- # of K-12 facilities reached
- # of K-12 educators reached
- # of students reached/participating in the Destination Ohio CPA program

Where We Are Now: Addressing Ohio's Accounting Talent Shortage

- % of program participants taking at least 1 part of the CPA Exam
- % of program participants passing at least 1 section of the CPA Exam

Work occurring outside of the OATN, as part of OSCPA's advocacy efforts (e.g., CPA pathways) is addressed in separate communications.