

## **INTRODUCTION**

In August, 2016 I submitted my practicum proposal to my supervisor at the Ohio Office of Budget and Management and to the State Library of Ohio. I proposed to map available State Library of Ohio resources to the 27 job competencies impacting the 66 job classifications and 253 employees at the Ohio Office of Budget and Management. The intended audience was OBM employees who are interested in advancing their careers and/or developing themselves in their current roles.

Both OBM and the State Library agreed to allow me to work on this project. The State Library agreed because they are hoping to take what I created and customize it for other state agencies. OBM agreed because the project would directly benefit OBM employees and aligned with our current focus on internal employee development.

I completed a sum total of 154 hours, 30 minutes of work on this project. Approximately 130 hours were performed on-site, and the rest were completed elsewhere. I am grateful to my employer for allowing me the time away from work to complete this project.

## **PRACTICUM OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES**

The objectives I originally proposed and their outcomes are listed below.

Objective 1: To showcase to all OBM employees (union and non-union) the books, online courses, databases, and other skill building and information resources which are freely available via the State Library of Ohio. Outcome: Mostly met.

The 66 resource guides I created (one for each job classification used at OBM) will be made available to OBM employees at some point in the future. The guides will be placed on a web-based repository that will include other tools employees can utilize for development. Both union and non-union positions are included in the guides. The resource guides contain primarily book

titles due to a narrowing of project scope that occurred midway through the project. Initially, I wanted each of the 27 competencies in use at OBM to have its own resource guide which would have included online courses (via the State Library's subscription to GALE Courses), and pertinent databases. I intended to have a position cover page and then three sheets following each position that would showcase resources for each competency. That is to say one position overview would be four pages long. This would have resulted in a 268 page document.

My supervisor at OBM was rightly concerned that this would result in information overload for end-users. I have also seen a practice in libraries where we tend to overload customers with too much information about our resources and services instead of giving the customer what they need and want. So, I changed my focus to highly just a small sample of resources with links to the State Library where users could find more information. Each resource guide includes a common footer which highlights the GALE Courses, Business Source Complete, and the Ohio Digital Library. The design I created intentionally utilizes white space and eye-catching graphics purchased from The Noun Project to create a sense of balance and accessibility.

A more accurate statement of the objective as it was achieved is: *To showcase to all OBM employees (union and non-union) the information resources which are freely available via the State Library of Ohio.*

Objective 2: To ensure the listed resources are relevant by aligning each topic guide to competencies, knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with positions at OBM.

Outcome: Mostly met.

The resource guides are indeed aligned to competencies which are tangentially related to the knowledge, skills, and abilities in use at OBM. However, individual KSAs can vary from position to position. To have created KSA guides for each of the 250+ positions at OBM would have been a much larger undertaking, and would not have allowed the project to be completed within

the agreed upon timeframe. For example, the position description for the Training Officer position at OBM has 25 KSAs listed. Using that as a high estimate of KSAs contained in other PDs, identifying just one resource for each KSA in each position at OBM would've resulted in a list of 1,650 resources.

The competencies in use at OBM (and throughout the state of Ohio enterprise), are based on information provided by ONET Online, a service of the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics. What ONET calls "work activities" the state of Ohio calls "competency." This can make it challenging to find resources related to the competencies, which can often be pretty granular. For example, "Interpreting the Meaning of Information for Others - Translating or explaining what information means and how it can be used" is a competency/work activity. As I began unpacking this language, I often found my search methodologies to be too narrow and literal. In many cases, I looked to the behavioral anchors provided by the Ohio Department of Administrative Services as they were associated with each competency. I used the anchors to inform my searches. In some cases, this was helpful and allowed me to reframe or target my searches in a different way. In other cases, the anchors were not helpful.

I also looked at which positions at OBM had the competency associated with them. This allowed me to frame my searches in the context of who would be utilizing them, but it also proved challenging. "Organizing, planning, and prioritizing work" is associated with five positions at OBM which range from the entry level Shared Services Associate position to Senior Internal Auditor. The context of the competency and what it means for the position can vary from position-to-position. So, I often reminded myself that these resource guides would serve as starters, and not end-all-be-all exhaustive lists.

A more accurate statement of the objective as it was achieved is: *To ensure the topic guides are relevant by aligning State Library resources to OBM position competencies.*

Objective 3: To demonstrate to employees who wish to advance their careers that many resources exist to help them build their knowledge and skills. Outcome: Met.

By having resource guides for each position utilized at OBM, I believe our employees will see the breadth and vast array of resources that the State Library can provide to them. I plan to have an active role in communicating this project to our staff and I believe I will be able to answer questions and/or direct OBM employees to the State Library for questions I can't answer regarding the resources and how to access them.

I took care in the design of the resource guides in order to make them appealing and desirable for employees. I am hopeful that the eye-catching graphics and resource titles will entice employees to explore what other tools are available at the State Library.

Objective 4: To allow the Training Director to test theory and principles learned in the Kent State University School of Library and Information Science and meet Master's level practicum requirements (150 hours) while also fulfilling an OBM need. Outcome: Met.

In order to complete this project, I reviewed my Access to Information course materials and recalled the importance of connecting people to information. On a practical level, I learned from my practicum supervisor and others at the State Library how to apply those concepts in the real world. More specifically, Nicole provided an overview of the State Library's discovery layer and all of the different sources it contains. She was able to explain to me the differences between the OhioLINK catalog and the State Library's classic catalog, and when to use either. Another more surprising reality was the suggestion to begin my search for materials on Amazon.com since it's often easier to navigate than a library catalog. Doing so helped me locate current/recently published materials and make purchasing suggestions for the State Library's collection development team.

Throughout my practicum, I had to balance the (very) real world expectation of maintaining my current workload on top of whatever work I completed at the State Library. This meant that my stakeholders came from more than just the library. In order to meet my supervisor's expectations, I needed to make sure that I was communicating my whereabouts and making myself as available as possible to my staff at OBM. I did this by making check-in phone calls and keeping our instant messaging system up and active on my personal computer. I sent almost weekly notifications to my staff to let them know when I'd be off site and how to get in touch with me if they needed anything. I was and am grateful to have had their support.

I also needed to ensure that the project outcomes met my supervisor's expectations. One of the most valuable components of this practicum was meeting with my supervisor halfway through and incorporating her direction and feedback to simplify the scope of the project. That is, I learned the value of making sure that I'm not "trying to boil the ocean" when outlining project objectives. Keep it simple, and get employees the information they need when they need it.

Preliminary feedback from both the State Library and OBM has been positive. The State Library has suggested submitting presentation proposals to ALA, OLC, and/or ALAO. A work colleague has suggested co-authoring a paper together on the practical applications of competency development guides in the government sector. I also shared a preview of the final results of this project with Stephanie Loucka, the executive director at the Ohio Department of Aging. Her response? *This is terrific!! I love it! This is EXACTLY what we need as a tool in the tool box to help people navigate the State's career opportunities.*

Objective: To create a base template the State Library can replicate using with other agencies. Outcome: Met.

I provided all data to the State Library including statewide position information such as number of positions and retirement projections. I communicated how I obtained this information (who I

talked to at the Ohio Department of Administrative Services (DAS)), and provided all templates, image files, and resource lists I had compiled. I also had the opportunity to sit with the Senior HR Analyst at the State Library. She will be taking on the role of agency outreach, and creating guides like this for other agencies will likely fall under her purview. In this meeting, I explained to her my search methodology and gave her a quick primer on controlled vocabulary and how it can be a little nuanced when it comes to creating these guides. I recommended that she work with a librarian if she encounters difficulties.

On November 7, 2016, I shared the results of my project with the following State Library stakeholders:

- Beverly Cain, State Librarian
- Ann Watson, Associate State Librarian
- Nicole Merriman, Head of Research & Catalog Services
- Stephanie Herriot, HR Administrator

During the presentation, I shared the above objectives and outcomes and made some recommendations for moving forward. Most of those recommendations are included below in the section “Objectives Not Attempted.”

### **SKILL AREAS NEEDING ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

One area where I think I can improve is better defining realistic project objectives. I often tend to see the potential in people and projects, and could do well to temper excitement with realistic expectations.

As far as technical expertise, I found that I was able to navigate the State Library’s classic catalog the easiest, but found the discovery layer to be a bit overwhelming. Nicole

recommended only using the discovery layer if I didn't have any idea where to start on a particular topic.

### **OBJECTIVES NOT ATTEMPTED**

I did not attempt to **create a user group profile** of OBM's employees due to time constraints. I recommended to the State Library that as they approach agencies with this concept that they create an agency-level user group profile to help start the conversation. Doing so would demonstrate to the agency that the State Library understands the agency's employees and their information needs. I recommended that the State Library utilize business intelligence data to pull demographic information (average employee age, average employee tenure, average education level, etc.) and that the State Library examine agency budget language to understand agency goals, objectives, mission, and priorities. This would help the State Library to align their proposal directly to the agency in a way that's relevant to them.

I did not create a way to **ensure up-to-the-minute current data** was reflected in the guides. The position data aren't hosted publicly and only reside in a report that must be run manually. I recommended that the State Library explore the feasibility of collaborating with DAS to automate the process utilizing linked data.

I did not **create dynamic guides**. The guides I created started in MS Publisher and converted to PDF utilizing mail merge capabilities. Due to the continuously changing position data as well as new competency-based resources being released, I recommended to the State Library that they be transitioned to an online format (HTML5) that can be dynamic and updated easily.

Also due to time constraints, I did not build in a **data validation process**. For instance the data provided by DAS says OBM has two directors. I learned later that OBM does technically have two Director positions under its roster, but the reason takes some explaining and doesn't need to be reflected in the final guides. I recommended that the State Library validate the data with

stakeholders prior to publishing final guides. I also recommended that the State Library may want to work with DAS to build a custom report in order to do away with some of the data manipulation that I performed by hand using basic Excel formulas.

### **OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE**

This was a very positive experience. I was able to work independently on most of the project, and I was permitted to seek advice and expertise whenever I needed it. I was afforded flexibility in scheduling and was able to maintain my current full-time work responsibilities while completing the work. I received timely, relevant feedback as I completed the project, and there were many employees who were willing to share their time and insight with me as I completed the work.

### **CONNECTIONS BETWEEN INTERNSHIP AND COURSEWORK**

As stated above, the primary connection was taking the knowledge I gained in the Access to Information course and applying it in a practical setting. These guides help connect State Library customers to information. What I think made this project unique was the addition of position/demographic data to the resource guides. Here I took the experience I've had working in Human Resources for the state of Ohio enterprise and applied it to the project. I listened to employees who said they didn't feel like they had any advancement opportunities and created at least a starting point for them to develop themselves professionally. This ties in a little to the Management and Leadership courses I took. I also knew that competency development and alignment was an important piece of this project, and that in order for it to be adopted it should align with current business objectives and priorities. A vision for OBM is in the process of being rolled out, and one of the key components of that vision is staff development. This project would be an excellent supplement to other staff development initiatives that may come out as a result of the new OBM vision.

### **SELF DISCOVERY**

Honestly, the most relevant thing I learned as a part of this process was not so much learning as affirmation. I enjoyed this work. I enjoyed being around the librarians and library consultants and managers of the State Library. I enjoyed creating a tool that could help with employee development initiatives.

This project affirmed for me that I am entering the profession with a dedication and commitment to the core values of librarianship. I want to see and help people improve themselves, their skills, and their competence, and I want to make sure libraries play a role in that development. I want to show others what is possible and help them realize their potential. This experience affirmed that I'm entering an exciting and crucial profession.

### **SURPRISES ABOUT THE WORK AND ENVIRONMENT**

Thankfully, I was familiar with the environment having worked for the State Library as their HR Manager for five years. While there were some new faces, there were many familiar ones too. Returning to perform most of this work on-site was fulfilling and a happy return to an environment I had hated to leave. That said, the work I performed was in a much different capacity than when I worked at the State Library as the HR Manager.

The biggest surprise came with how much more challenging the work was than I had anticipated. I didn't think it would be difficult to locate resources related to the state's competency model, and for some competencies it wasn't. Competencies like thinking creatively, training others, and problem solving are all pretty broad topic areas and I was able to find resources for them rather easily. Their meaning is also fairly intuitive, which certainly helped. On the other hand, competencies like "estimating the quantifiable characteristics of products, events, or information," or "identifying objects, actions, and events" or "interpreting the meaning of information for others" proved quite challenging to interpret and align resources to. There

were days when I left the State Library mentally exhausted from trying to figure out the best way to represent these competencies. Thankfully, through a combination of external perspectives and scope refinement, I was able to complete this project within the timeframe allotted and by my self-imposed deadline of October 31.

### **STUDENTS CONSIDERING AN INTERNSHIP AT THE STATE LIBRARY**

The State Library is a wonderful place to complete a practicum because they have an impact on Ohio libraries of all types. Students can get exposed to many aspects of the library profession here, from LSTA grant administration and payroll processing to summer reading and strategic planning; from digitization and electronic resource management to reference and traditional cataloging services. The State Library has been awarded a Top Workplace award for the second time, and it's easy to see why. The staff is competent, kind, and extremely dedicated to the work they perform. The only downside is that State Library practicum students are typically unpaid. However, the experience and connections made while performing work for the State Library is very much worth the time.

## Appendix A: Original Practicum Proposal

### MAPPING AVAILABLE RESOURCES TO OBM JOB COMPETENCIES

Highlighting free and relevant professional development resources to OBM employees

### OBJECTIVE(S)

#### TO CURATE AND CREATE STATE LIBRARY TOPIC GUIDES FOR OBM STAFF

- To showcase to all OBM employees (bargaining unit and exempt) the books, online courses, databases, and other skill building and information resources which are freely available via the State Library of Ohio.
- To ensure the listed resources are relevant by aligning each topic guide to competencies and positions at OBM.
- To demonstrate to employees who wish to advance their careers that many resources exist to help them build their knowledge and skills.
- To allow the Training Director to test theory and principles learned in the Kent State University School of Library and Information Science and meet Master's level practicum requirements (150 hours) while also fulfilling an OBM need.
- To create a base template the State Library can replicate using with other agencies.

### RATIONALE

A strategic goal of the Operations Division is to help ensure employees have a path and feel an expectation to grow and develop their knowledge and skills over an extended period of time. To assist in this goal, Training Academy will be taking a more deliberate approach to internal staff development efforts. However, OBM TA also provides a great deal of support to external customers. What resources are available for employees when OBM TA isn't immediately available?

Additionally, both bargaining unit and exempt employees are going to be rated on pre-determined competencies each rating period in ePerformance. While these competencies have been identified and communicated to employees and managers, providing specific training on each competency may not be feasible due to the time consuming nature of instructional design life cycle. Therefore, what resources exist for employees who wish to increase their competence in the areas they'll be rated on?

This project would answer both of these questions by providing a collection of competency-aligned resources employees can access from the State Library of Ohio's robust collection of resources. This project would also help to show employees in lower-level positions the types of competencies and KSAs they need to possess (and resources that can help develop them) should those employees wish to advance their careers.

#### FINANCIAL IMPACT

- The only financial impact is time. The cost to the agency would be approximately 150 hours of the Training Director's time which would be spent researching, compiling, and formatting the guides for distribution to OBM employees. Per practicum requirements, those hours would need to be spent on-site at the State Library (as far as I'm aware).

#### ACTION

I am seeking approval to proceed with the project of aligning State Library resources to the competencies (and some KSAs) utilized at OBM, and to spend approximately 150 on-site (i.e. State Library) hours performing this work. The logistics of hours/reporting-location would be subject to supervisory approval.

**Appendix B: Sample of Completed Guide**

# Senior Financial Manager

**Overview**

**Purpose**  
The purpose of the financial manager occupation is to manage & direct agency financial planning, budgeting &/or sourcing activities. [\(learn more\)](#)

**4**  
positions at OBM

**34**  
positions statewide

**52%**

can retire within 5 years

**EXEMPT**

**16**  
pay grade

Data kindly provided by OAS Talent Management, current as of September 2016

**Minimum Qualifications**  
Completion of graduate core program in public or business administration, accounting, finance or related field; 30 mos. exp. or 30 mos. trg. in financial administration; 12 mos. exp. or 12 mos. trg. in supervisory principles & techniques. [\(view alternate equivalents\)](#)

**Competency Development Resources**

STATE

LIBRARY OF OHIO

State Library  
card required  
[\(get a card\)](#)

**Making Decisions and Solving Problems**  
Analyzing information and evaluating results to choose the best solution and solve problems.

**Search Terms**

- [Group decision making](#)
- [Decision making](#)
- [Decision making – Case studies](#)
- [Problem solving](#)

**Developing Objectives and Strategies**  
Establishes long-range objectives and specifies the strategies and actions to achieve them.

**Search Terms**

- [Business planning](#)
- [Leadership](#)
- [Organizational change](#)
- [Strategic planning](#)
- [Strategy](#)

**Providing Consultation and Advice to Others**  
Providing guidance and expert advice to management or other groups on technical, systems-, or process-related topics.

**Search Terms**

- [Business analysts](#)
- [Business consultants](#)
- [Consultants](#)

**Even More**

**Ohio Digital Library**  
eBooks, Audiobooks, Digital magazines. [\(visit site\)](#)

**Business Source Complete**  
Journals, Magazines, Newspapers. Much more [\(access remotely\)](#)

**Gale Courses**  
Online, instructor-led, 300+ topics. Evaluatively available to State Employees. [\(learn more\)](#)

**Need Help?**  
Link not working? Call the State Library at 614.544.7061 for help.

### **Appendix C: Acknowledgements**

This project would not have been possible without the support of the following individuals:

- Rae Ann Estep, OBM
- Beverly Cain, State Library
- Ann Watson, State Library
- Nicole Merriman, State Library
- Cindy Boyden, State Library
- Evan Struble, State Library
- Jen Johnson, State Library
- Jessica Schuster, DAS
- Kirstin Krumsee, State Library
- Dr. Miriam Matteson, Kent State
- Ray Justice, DAS
- Rich Campbell, OBM
- Scott Steenrod, DAS
- Stephanie Herriott, State Library
- The Staff of the OBM Training Academy