



2025 NAGDCA Leadership Recognition Award Submission

PLAN PROFILE:

Plan: Ohio Deferred Compensation (Ohio DC)

Plan Type: 457(b) (pre-tax & Roth)

Participants: 277,444 accounts **Assets:** \$21 Billion

Administrator: Ohio DC (Defined Contribution)

Category: Communication and Marketing

Initiative: Ohio DC Employer Recognition Program

Overview of the Ohio DC Employer Recognition Program

The Ohio Deferred Compensation (Ohio DC) Employer Recognition Program honors employers who excel in supporting their employees' retirement planning. This program acknowledges employers who show significant improvements in participation and contributions through educational initiatives. Recognition of both small and large employers include growth in new enrollments, increase in active participants, growth in SMarT Plan (Save More Tomorrow automatic contribution increase) enrollments, and increase in total contributions.

Award-winning employers are featured on the Ohio DC website and in newsletters highlighting their dedication to their employees' financial futures. This recognition not only celebrates their efforts but also encourages other employers to adopt similar strategies, enhancing retirement preparedness for employees across the state.

Campaign Goals:

1. **Motivate employees** to increase their contribution rates by highlighting the importance of saving more for a secure retirement and offering flexible contribution options.
2. **Boost the employer adoption** of the Roth option, enabling employees to make after-tax contributions for greater flexibility in their retirement planning.
3. **Celebrate employers** who excel in promoting Ohio DC through the Employer Recognition Program, highlighting their efforts and inspiring others to adopt similar strategies.
4. **Encourage employees** to actively participate in the plan through educational sessions and personalized consultations, helping them make informed decisions about their retirement savings.
5. **Drive higher enrollment rates** by raising awareness of the Ohio DC plan's benefits and simplifying the enrollment process.

"The Ohio DC Employer Recognition Program shines a spotlight on employers who go above and beyond in supporting their employees' retirement planning. By celebrating these leaders, we not only honor their dedication but also inspire a statewide movement towards enhanced financial security for all employees."

- Lauren Gresh, Ohio DC Executive Director

Ohio DC Employer Recognition Program: Celebrating Excellence in Retirement Planning and Education

Ohio DC empowers participants with educational resources, diverse investment options, and flexible savings and withdrawal choices. To help employees plan and save for retirement, employers must adopt the Ohio DC plan. Many employers across various sectors support their employees by choosing Ohio DC as their preferred retirement savings vehicle.

An informal study gathered feedback from employers on how they engage their employees about the benefits of Ohio DC. This data revealed key traits among employers with significant employee engagement, enrollment, and contributions to the Ohio DC plan:

- **Proactive plan promotion**
- **Retirement educational sessions**
- **Heightened engagement from human resources staff, key employees, and gatekeepers**

Recognition:

To honor these exemplary efforts, Ohio DC created the Employer Recognition Program. This program celebrates employers who go above and beyond in supporting their employees' retirement planning through educational initiatives and measurable improvements in participation. The program recognizes small and large employers in two categories.

The criteria for recognition include:

- **Growth in New Enrollments**
- **Increase in Active Participants**
- **Increase in Total Contributions**
- **Progress in SMaRT Plan Enrollments**

Each year, the Ohio DC board reviews employers' performance and recognizes those with outstanding results. Award-winning employers receive a framed Ohio DC Board Resolution and are celebrated on the Ohio DC website and in newsletters, highlighting their commitment to their employees' financial futures.

Key to this initiative:

By rewarding employers, Ohio DC not only acknowledges their hard work but also creates a ripple effect that enhances retirement preparedness for employees across the state. This comprehensive approach ensures a more secure financial future for all public employees in Ohio.

The Impact of Rewarding Employers for Promoting Ohio DC:

Boosting Employer Motivation

Recognizing employers for their efforts in promoting Ohio DC increases their retirement motivation. The award serves as a powerful incentive, encouraging employers to continue their proactive efforts in supporting employee retirement savings.

Enhancing Statewide Engagement

The award sets a positive example for others. This recognition inspires more employers across the state to actively engage with and promote Ohio DC, leading to a wider adoption of retirement benefits. Some employers proactively reach out to Ohio DC after reading about these awards asking how they can win an award.

Sharing Best Practices

Award-winning employers share their successful strategies and best practices with others. This knowledge transfer helps create a community of employers who are well-equipped to promote retirement savings effectively, benefiting employees statewide.

Strengthening Employer-Employee Relationships

The program fosters a sense of trust and loyalty between employers and employees. Employees appreciate their employer's commitment to their long-term financial goals, leading to stronger workplace relationships.

Positive Publicity and Reputation

Employers who receive the award for their efforts in promoting Ohio DC gain positive publicity. This enhances their reputation to boost employee retention. It is not uncommon for articles to appear in local community news.

Ohio DC 2024 Success Stories and Results:

- **City of Fairborn 164% Increase in Year Over Year Enrollments:** Fairborn's proactive approach, starting with new employee orientations and distributing marketing materials, led to a significant enrollment boost. The successful adoption of the Roth option played a key role in this increase.
- **City of Moraine 375% Increase in Year Over Year Enrollments:** Moraine's adoption of the Roth option, combined with group and individual educational sessions, significantly boosted employee engagement and enrollments. Their consistent promotion ensures employees are well-informed about their retirement options.
- **Paulding County Hospital 67% of Participants Enrolled in the SMarT Plan:** The HR Director has fostered a culture that values Ohio DC, informing all new employees about its benefits. This approach has resulted in a high enrollment rate in the SMarT Plan.
- **Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library 78% of Participants Enrolled in the SMarT Plan:** Annual educational sessions during "All Staff Day," led by Ohio DC's Field Account Executive, are highly attended. Follow-up individual meetings at various branches further enhance employee engagement and participation.
- **Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority 33% Increase in Year Over Year Active Participation:** The HR department's diligent distribution of Ohio DC enrollment forms and early discussions about the Plan's benefits, along with the addition of the Roth option in 2023, have led to increased active participation.
- **Warren Local School District 343% Increase in Year Over Year Active Participation:** The new Treasurer and her staff quickly added 20 new participants by providing enrollment content. They now include EZ enrollment materials in new hire packets and actively encourage employee engagement.
- **Morrow County 24% Increase in Year Over Year Total Contributions:** A proactive approach by a new contact in the Auditor's office, including attending Ohio DC webinars, distributing EZ enrollment forms, and adopting the Roth option, has significantly increased total contributions.
- **Washington-Nile Local School District 47% Increase in Year Over Year Total Contributions:** The Superintendent and Treasurer identified low retirement savings and sought Ohio DC's help. By distributing Opt-in enrollment forms and encouraging engagement, they achieved a substantial increase in participation and total contributions.

These results underscore the importance of proactive promotion, educational initiatives, and consistent engagement in driving the success of Ohio DC. By adopting these strategies, employers can significantly enhance their employees' retirement savings and overall financial well-being.

Application to other plans:

Other retirement plan sponsors can create a Recognition Program similar to Ohio DC's by focusing on recognizing individuals who actively engage with their retirement plans and influence others. This program could celebrate participants, department leaders or directors who demonstrate retirement plan championing behaviors, such as supporting educational sessions or supporting plan adoption. By highlighting these individuals, Plan Sponsors can motivate others to take similar steps towards securing their financial futures.

To ensure the program's success, Plan Sponsors should establish clear criteria for recognition, such as growth in contributions, participation in educational initiatives, and overall engagement with the plan. Recognized employers could be featured in newsletters, digitally on websites, and through social media channels, providing them with public acknowledgment and appreciation. This approach not only boosts individual motivation but also fosters a community of informed and proactive savers, ultimately enhancing the overall effectiveness of the retirement plan.

Campaign Content:



OHIO Deferred Compensation
Invest in you.

At Ohio Deferred Compensation we realize how much dedication and hard work is required on the part of our employers to advocate for retirement savings. To recognize all of their hard work and to express our appreciation, the Ohio DC Board of Trustees honored eight outstanding employers in November 2024 with a Resolution through our Employer Recognition Program. Each of the employers below support Ohio DC through collaboration with educational initiatives, cooperation with Field Account Executives' efforts, and measurably improved participation statistics over time.

Increased percentage of new enrollments

City of Fairborn

The City of Fairborn is an excellent partner in promoting Ohio DC, starting with new employee orientation meetings. The employer actively distributes marketing materials with Field Account Executive contact information and consistently schedules individual sessions with employees. The large increase in enrollments was due to a successful Roth adoption. Our Field Account Executive was invited to host multiple educational sessions every day for a week to make sure every employee had an opportunity to learn more about Ohio DC.



City of Moraine

The City of Moraine adopted the Roth option and set up group educational sessions and individual follow-up consultations with our Field Account Executive to meet with employees. They consistently promote Ohio DC to make sure employees know their options for retirement savings.



Total percentage of active participants enrolled in the SMarT Plan

Paulding County Hospital

The Human Resources Liaison is driving positive results by informing all new employees of the value of Ohio DC. She has created a culture where all employees know that Ohio DC is an excellent choice for retirement savings. Our Field Account Executive is on-site regularly to assist employees, making Ohio DC the most visible of the plans they offer.



Heights Libraries


On an annual basis, the library invites our Field Account Executive to the "All Staff Day" to conduct an educational session about Ohio DC. It is the most requested and attended session. As a follow-up, Ohio DC is invited to conduct individual meetings with staff at various branches.



Increased percentage in active participants


Cincinnati Metro Housing Authority

The Human Resources department is extremely diligent about distributing the Ohio DC enrollment form and speaking to employees about the benefits of the Plan early in their career. The employer also added the Roth option in 2023 and has invited our Field Account Executive for multiple meetings with staff.



Warren Local School District


Prior to the current administration, Ohio DC had limited access to employees. Our Field Account Executive approached the new Treasurer and her staff and asked them to distribute the Opt-in enrollment form. They immediately added 20 new participants and have been including Ohio DC materials with new hire packets. Ohio DC has also been invited to participate in staff in-service events.



Increased percentage in total employer contributions

Morrow County

A new contact in the Auditor's office has attended Ohio DC webinars, began distributing EZ enrollment forms to employees, and has adopted the Roth option. This proactive approach has increased total contributions to Ohio DC over the past year.



Washington-Nile Local School District

The school district has a Superintendent and Treasurer who researched participation rates across all their supplemental plans and found that many employees were not saving for retirement. They contacted our Field Account Executive and asked for help with increasing participation. They agreed to distribute the Opt-in form which drastically increased participation in the spring of this year. Ohio DC conducted a second visit in the fall. The combination of these activities resulted in a significant increase in total contributions.

Public employees can sign up for Ohio Deferred Compensation at ohio457.org. If your organization is promoting retirement readiness among your employees, please let us know.



Employers Recognized

The Ohio DC Board of Trustees formally recognized the following employers' achievements in improved retirement education, enrollment, and savings among their employees during 2024.

We appreciate everything these organizations do to make sure Ohio's public employees are ready for retirement!

- * Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority
- * City of Fairborn
- * City of Moraine
- * Heights Libraries
- * Morrow County
- * Paulding County Hospital
- * Warren Local School District
- * Washington-Nile Local School District