



2026 NASPE Awards Program

Eugene H. Rooney, Jr. Award Nomination Innovative State Human Resource Management Program

Submission Deadline: April 17, 2026

Submission Method: Submit via the 2026 NASPE Awards Nomination Form.
Upload this completed template and the required one-page summary within the form.

Nominations from dues-paying states are considered for eligibility. Nominated programs should have a positive effect on the administration of state human resource programs. A state's central human resource department or line agency human resource operations may administer nominated programs.

Programs and projects must have been operational for at least six months prior to nomination and must be transferable to other states. Selection criteria are based on the questions asked on the award application. Included in this packet are the specific criteria for each award and their categories. Nominations are encouraged in all areas of human resource management administration.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program Title: HR Insights State: OH

Contact Person: Ray Justice

Contact's Title: HR Project Manager

Agency: Ohio Department of Administrative Services

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NOMINATOR INFORMATION

Nominator: Nancy Hyme-Brewer Title: State Chief Human Resources Officer

State: OH Agency: Ohio Department of Administrative Services

Telephone: 614-466-6023

E-mail: Nancy.Hyme-Brewer@das.ohio.gov

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DETAILS

Please attach a one-page summary of the program (**see page five below**). Narrative responses should generally not exceed 4–6 pages (based on regular 8 1/2 x 11-inch paper, double-spaced in 12-point font). The 4–6 page guidance does not include the required one-page summary.

1. Please provide a brief description of this program.

HR Insights was established based upon a concept from the State of Ohio's Director of Human Resources for Governor Mike DeWine. It is an in-person, cohort-based development program of mid-career-ladder up-and-coming human resources professionals who are selected to attend by their respective agency's Human Resources Director. Participants are typically individual contributors or first-tier managers in their human resources sections.

Participants are required to attend at least five of six core sessions (see attached one-page summary for additional details) and have the option to attend several other non-core offerings. The monthly time commitment averages 2.5 hours over a seven-month period. Upon completion, participants receive a certificate during a final celebratory event.

2. How long has this program been operational (month and year)?

The first cohort kicked off on July 27, 2023. This year, the fourth cohort began on April 9, 2026.

3. Why was this program created? (What problem[s] or issues does it address?)

In partnership with the Governor's Office, HR Insights was created to build the capabilities of up-and-coming human resources professionals across the state. Originally envisioned as a series of networking opportunities, the HR Project Manager evolved the program to encompass developmental topics with a strong focus on networking built in throughout each cohort experience.

Since each agency has its own human resources presence, practitioners can become siloed within their own human resources section as well as their own specific specialty. Additionally, each agency has its own unique culture, leading to small differences in practices; cross-populating ideas, methods, and concepts

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amongst agencies results in more well-rounded human resources professionals. Finally, pulling cohort members together creates opportunities for networking not only with each other, but with human resources leaders from across the state, who serve as guest panelists and presenters throughout the cohort experience.

4. Why is this program a new and creative method?

In the last 15 years, human resources at the State of Ohio has not had a targeted, intentional developmental focus. As human resources professionals, practitioners generally acknowledge the value of development, but it is often difficult to carve out the necessary time needed to do so. By launching HR Insights, the state has created a space for mid-career-ladder practitioners to explore other areas of human resources, meet practitioners in other agencies, and begin establishing their own personal board of directors to act as a future advisory council/sounding board.

5. What were the startup costs? (Provide detailed information about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology, and staff already in place.)

No special purchases (e.g., technology) were necessary to begin this program. The HR Project Manager's salary upon launching HR Insights was an annualized \$121,180.

6. What are the program's operational costs?

The ongoing costs for this program include the salary for the HR Project Manager.

7. How is this program funded?

The Ohio Department of Administrative Services State Human Resources Division operating fund covers the program costs through normal salary and benefits paid to the HR Project Manager.

8. Did this program originate in your state? Yes ☒ No ☐

9. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? Yes ☐ No ☒

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If yes, how does this program differ?

Click or tap here to enter text.

10. How do you measure the success of this program?

We currently track the number of cohort members that complete the program, which program sessions offer the most impact, and how many cohort members promote into a higher-level role following cohort completion.

For example, after the 2025 cohort, 129 agency human resources practitioners had completed the program. In 2026, an additional 55 recently started the program.

Anecdotal success has been reported by agency human resources leaders and alumni, with many commenting on the program's value and the excitement with which they look forward to placing team members in future cohorts.

11. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

In 2023, this program began with just a concept from the Director of Human Resources for Governor Mike DeWine. The initial concept was simply for the HR Project Manager to build a space for human resources practitioners to meet and network. From there, the cohort-based learning structure evolved and largely remains intact.

Topics have been adjusted as well; for instance, one topic was emotional intelligence, but based upon cohort feedback, was replaced with working through conflict. Another topical shift was around the basics of the state's budget cycle; originally, this was a core topic, but feedback showed that the topic of collective bargaining was more in-demand for subsequent cohorts. Budgeting is now covered in an optional, one-hour virtual lunch and learn session.

Optional offerings have grown and evolved as well. 2023's initial cohort had no optional sessions beyond the six core sessions, but for 2026, we have four lunch and learns, meet-and-greet opportunities with our state's Chief Human Resources Officer, and an after-hours offsite networking event.

Finally, with three completed cohorts, a stronger alumni presence and purpose has emerged for 2026. An alumnus prepared and led other alumni in a panel discussion

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during the April 9, 2026 opening event and plans to engage fellow alumni throughout the current cohort as well.

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ONE-PAGE SUMMARY: HR Insights

Program Description

Throughout this program, cohort participants learn valuable lessons in leadership firsthand from notable guest speakers complemented by selected courses from the Department of Administrative Services' leadership development curriculum.

Intention & Goals

The HR Insights program is designed to equip and prepare the next generation of leaders for a life of public service by strengthening the statewide HR bench. Participants gain skills and insights from leaders who have experienced HR from various skill paths. HR Insights is intended to be highly engaging and interactive, giving participants access to HR leaders throughout the state.

The program's vision is to intentionally prepare and equip current and future public servant leaders. As such, each executive branch HR Director is asked to identify and select one or two cohort member candidates who are considered future leaders, but who may not otherwise have had an opportunity to engage in cross-agency collaboration.

Participation Expectations

- Cohort members agree to a time commitment of approximately 2.5 hours per month, plus additional time for selected optional activities.
- Classes run from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. with the opportunity to bring or venture out to lunch with other cohort members afterward.
- Cohort members complete all assigned pre-work and self-assessments.
- Cohort members must attend no less than 5 of the 6 core monthly sessions to complete the program (excluding the scheduled Recognition Event).

Course Information

- Leveraging DISC to Foster Positive Work Relationships (preceded by a self-assessment)
- Insights: My Journey Through HR (Panel Discussion)
- Overcome Conflict Through Conversation (preceded by a self-assessment)
- Insights: The Art of Saying "No" While Helping Your Agency Get To "Yes" (Panel Discussion)
- Insights: Collective Bargaining (Panel discussion)
- Recognition Event
- Optional Opportunities:
 - Lunch and Learns
 - CHRO Meet and Greet
 - After-hours Networking Event

Competencies Developed

- Communicating with Supervisors, Peers and Staff
- Developing and Building Teams
- Establishing and Maintaining Interpersonal Relationships
- Influencing or Selling to Others
- Updating and Using Relevant Knowledge