

Gateway OSCP Meeting Responses

In response to the meeting dated September 5, 2018 with Lt. Governor Mary Taylor and OSCP members, we have compiled the responses below to the concerns raised. We have attempted to summarize and restate the concerns expressed, and have catalogued them into a few key categories.

Note that the Gateway Modernization Team hopes to follow up on the meeting by establishing a Business User Community working group, consisting of Gateway users across the business spectrum, but with a strong presence from OSCP and your members. It is our intention to leverage this group to improve communication and resources available to business users, to identify and prioritize future enhancements, and to ensure the long-term partnership between the Ohio Business Gateway and the Ohio businesses who use it.

As such, for some of the concerns raised in the meeting with Lt. Governor Taylor, there may not be definitive answers today but we hope to use the Business User Community to work toward resolutions that are most beneficial to your members.

Issues That Can Be Addressed Today

The following issues were raised in the meeting with Lt. Governor Taylor and can be addressed today, either by clearing up confusion or because there is an immediate resolution to the problem.

Discussion Topic: Service Provider users are unsure of the number of individuals who can have access to an account and experiencing issues when too many users have access to a business account. Some users expressed that there is a limit of five users per client, which is very restrictive for firms that work in team formats.

Response: There is no limit to the number of users who can be given access to an account. However, we will continue to work with OSCP and the Business User Community to help communicate this fact to those users who are having challenges with this issue.

Discussion Topic: Some Service Providers would like for the security access model to be changed and for each business account or client to have a username/password that is shared.

Response: Extensive outreach was conducted in 2015, and Service Providers including CPAs requested that the modernized Gateway provide a way for them to access multiple client accounts in a secure fashion. In the previous system, some CPAs had been filing transactions using their client's credentials (i.e., sharing usernames and passwords). The vast majority of the feedback we received complained about the inefficiency of this process, and we also identified that it posed a security risk for all involved. As a result, the modernized Gateway shifted to a user-based access model where each username and password aligns to an individual user,

rather than to an individual business. We understand that this represents a change in practice for some CPAs, and we remain committed to helping them adjust to the new requirements. But this change aligns with desire we heard from users as well as the latest in security best practices.

Discussion Topic: The system should have an automatic log-out feature.

Response: This was identified as a system defect and was fixed in the Production environment on August 28, 2018. The automatic log out time is now 15 minutes.

Discussion Topic: Business users need an avenue by which to submit suggestions to the Gateway.

Response: Suggestions and feedback can be submitted to the Gateway by completing the [Contact us by email form](#) on the Help page of gateway.ohio.gov. There is a specific FAQ related to submitting suggestions for future enhancements on the [gateway.ohio.gov FAQs page](#).

Discussion Topic: It would be incredibly beneficial for OBG and OH|ID to be linked with the ODJFS/ERIC system. Initial conversations several years ago seemed to indicate that this would be a “one-stop” service for Ohio businesses.

Response: OH|ID is not currently linked with ODJFS/ERIC system, but this linkage is listed on the OH|ID roadmap. Please note that any final determinations about this linkage will be made by ODJFS and OH|ID, and the Gateway will have no bearing on the decision.

Discussion Topic: Service Provider users are unsure of how to control employee access - i.e., how to remove some or all access for an employee. If an employee leaves, I have to individually delete their access for each client.

Response: Controlling and removing employee access is available in the Modernized Gateway by utilizing the “Deactivate” and “Terminate” buttons on the Account Access Requests tab of the Account Access Management page (click the Lock icon in the upper right-hand corner of the Gateway).

To deactivate a business user from a single client account, click on the “–” icon in the *Actions* column. This option retains the individual’s access to all other client accounts.

To terminate a business user from a business account, click on the “Terminate” icon under the *Actions* column. This completely removes the relationship between that individual and your firm’s account, as well as any other client accounts with which they are associated. Once an individual’s access is terminated, the Filing Administrator cannot reinstate access.

There are currently two step-by-step guides included in the modernized Gateway knowledge base, and these should be part of the efforts, working with OSCP, to make resources more accessible to your members as described later in this document.

Discussion Topic: You can’t see the social security numbers (not even the last 4 digits) in the ODJFS form input screen. When you have multiple folks with the same last name, this can become a difficult task. It shows when you print the confirmation, but not in the input screen. You were also able to sort the screen by last name to enter the wages.

Response: This was addressed in the October 17, 2018 release and the last 4 digits have now been unmasked.

Discussion Topic: Ability to sort employee roster. When an employer has several employees (as few as 10), the ability to sort by name is a significant timesaver.

Response: Response: This feature was implemented in the October 17, 2018 release

Discussion Topic: Overall site is more time consuming and tedious than the old system; What used to take 2-3 steps, now takes 5-6 steps. Specifically, there are too many screens for school district and municipal filings.

Response: We were able to meet with the OSCP member who submitted this comment on Oct 11th to complete a walk-through of the process and demonstrate there were no redundancies. In the previous Gateway there was significant scrolling, which we reduced and today the steps are the same, just broken up into a more user-friendly consumable format.

Discussion Topic: Information provided by Help Desk agents is at times inconsistent, and sometimes users receive conflicting answers depending on who answers the phone

Response: Ongoing training and monitoring of staff who interact with business users is conducted to remediate this issue.

Discussion Topic: Service Providers cannot locate the prior payment lookup shortcut link for Municipal filings.

Response: The link for prior payment lookup is located under "Review History" in Withholding Returns & Payments transaction.

Discussion Topic: The date of the Phase 1 go-live should have been communicated earlier.

Response: The Gateway Modernization Project Team communicated the go-live date to external users the week prior via direct email, notifications on the previous Gateway system's log-in page and via newsletters and articles placed in OSCP's *CPA Takeaways* newsletter. However, the feedback is helpful and the team will look at giving users more advance notice ahead of future changes.

Discussion Topic: How much beta testing was actually done before go-live? Did it involve front-end support and actual regular users of OBG, not upper-level management? Based on conversations and experiences since the 7/2 go live, it does NOT appear that this actually happened.

Response: Throughout all phases of the project, the project has focused on active engagement with Gateway business users by collecting and implementing their feedback. Feedback gathering activities included:

- Business user focus groups and interviews
- Online surveys of more than 2,000 business users

- In-person “Kick the Tires” sessions where business users – including CPAs and other Service Providers – completed tasks in the modernized Gateway and provided feedback on their experience
- 13 weeks of user acceptance testing (UAT) in partnership with representatives from all Service Partner agencies and municipal representatives
- End-to-end system “Day in the Life” testing

Business User Communications/Helpful Resources

Throughout the Gateway Modernization project, the team has worked to compile a number of self-help resources – including FAQs, step-by-step guides, video tutorials, and others – to assist users with the challenges that inevitably come with a new system. However, we understand that in the midst of trying to solve a problem, it may be difficult to identify the resource that may be most helpful to a user, and the resource may be too complicated or “not speak the language” of the business user. It is our intention to utilize the Business User Community to help revamp these resources to make them as user-friendly as possible, to help communicate their existence and raise awareness, to help organize them in a way that makes them as accessible as possible, and to identify the need for additional resources when necessary.

In some cases below, we have provided specific answers to how to complete a task, but recognize that if there is confusion, we need to work closely with the Business User Community to communicate the message.

Discussion Topic: Tutorials are too technical and are hard to follow, especially for clients. Need trainings that are more user-friendly, possibly more webinars.

Response: We look forward to utilizing the Business User Community to review and make more accessible existing video tutorials, step-by-step guides, FAQs, etc. and to consider different vehicles for communicating, including webinars.

Discussion Topic: The process to request/grant access and add Service Areas and transactions is cumbersome. There are too many steps in the process and they are not intuitive. For example, there are about 10 steps to add a service like CAT which is too many for non-tech savvy clients.

Response: We will work with the Business User Community to look for ways to streamline these processes, but also on the resources available to help users. Currently, there are several FAQs, video tutorials, PDF guides, and step-by-step instructions to assist users in navigating this process, and we will work with the Business User Community to make them as helpful as possible.

Discussion Topic: Business users do not know how to edit their business name.

Response: A Filing Administrator user on a business account can update the Account Name, Trade (DBA) Name and Account Phone Number. Click on the “Administration” icon (looks like a person) in the upper right-hand corner of the Gateway. Navigate to the Company Information

tab and click the “Edit” button to update the applicable fields. Finally, click the “Save” button to save changes.

Discussion Topic: The ability to mark a transaction as a “favorite” is not available on all transactions or is hard to find.

Response: Business users can mark any transactions to which they have access as a favorite. Click on the “Administration” icon (looks like a person) in the upper right-hand corner of the Gateway. Navigate to the Preferences tab and click the “Manage Favorite Transactions” header. Click the “+” in the Actions column next to each transaction that should be marked as a favorite. The icon will change to a checkmark, indicating the transaction is now marked as a favorite. To unfavorite a transaction, click the checkmark icon, and it will change back to a “+” icon.

Discussion Topic: Clients are unable to see transactions that have been prepared by a Service Provider.

Response: For a transaction to be viewable by a client, they must have the transaction type authorizations fully enabled for that transaction (Read, Edit, Create, Delete and Submit toggles all selected and approved for the transaction on the Access Requests tab). Once this is in place, they can view and checkout the transaction. Developing an effective way to communicate this process should be addressed by the Business User Group.

Issues That Require Additional Discussion

Some of the items referred from the meeting with Lt. Governor Taylor appear to identify specific user issues, and it is not immediately clear what problems the users have been having. In these cases, we would like to work with OSCPA and the individual users directly to make sure we understand the problem and can work toward resolution.

Discussion Topic: Because of the mess created by having our service provider set up the fix was to connect all clients to all staff. Now we have issues that the system is locking up and having errors because there are too many users attached to each client. We are now going to have to go through a massive project to remove the unneeded to folks to each of 1,000 clients.

Response: Additional information regarding the specific situation being referenced is needed to research further, but the Modernization Project Team is aware of a one-off situation in which a firm requested that more than 100 staff members be provided access to more than 1,000 client accounts, against the advice of the project team. That firm is now manually adjusting each individual staff member’s access.

Discussion Topic: Transactions and actions should occur instantaneously.

Response: Additional information regarding the specific situation being referenced is needed to research further or provide a response.

Discussion Topic: Names are not corrected when submitted so therefore not all names are correct.

Response: Additional information regarding the specific situation being referenced is needed to research further or determine the specific enhancement being requested.

Discussion Topic: I need the ability to make a payment before the first of the month. Payroll processing is completed for the month, but we are unable to make the payment at that time as payments are not available until sometime on the first day of the month.

Response: Additional information regarding the specific transaction being referenced is needed to research further or determine the specific enhancement being requested.

Discussion Topic: Receipts for municipal estimates are identical.

Response: Additional information regarding the specific situation being referenced is needed to research further or provide a response.

Enhancement Prioritization

In addition to communication with Ohio businesses, the Gateway Team intends to use the Business User Community to identify, prioritize, and work to implement needed enhancements to the Ohio Business Gateway. The list below will be used as a catalog of issues that we will work on with the Business User Community to address.

Discussion Topic: Receipts should be more descriptive and include additional information. It should be easier to print a payment receipt and there should be more descriptive receipts for the exact transaction performed, since sometimes CPAs need these to send to clients and keep for their files.

Response: This issue has been noted as a system enhancement request and will be considered for potential future implementation. There is an existing FAQ around how to find detailed transaction history/receipts on the [gateway.ohio.gov FAQs page](#).

Discussion Topic: Add a dedicated option for CPAs/Service Providers to the IVR.

Response: The Gateway Help Desk is currently organized to provide support based on the system issue a user is encountering or the filing a user is currently processing, but this suggestion will be considered for future Help Desk business process updates.

Discussion Topic: Help case communication threads are hard to track or differentiate between business accounts. We receive an email stating “awaiting response” but have no indication of what the question is. Cases are sometimes closed without resolution.

Response: Gateway Help Desk is analyzing current business processes related to help case communication and considering possible changes to address this issue in the future.

Discussion Topic: Timeline of future changes and enhancements to the Gateway, and what can be done now vs. Phase 2, Phase 3, and so on.

Response: The Phase 2 plan – including enhancements requested by OSCP and others – is currently being reviewed and refined with state agencies. The timing of specific enhancements

is something we want to work with the Business User Group to determine and prioritize among those items. It is the plan to ultimately retire the former Gateway system.

Discussion Topic: BWC's presence on the Gateway - is this a future enhancement?

Response: The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) formerly hosted transactions on the Gateway. When the agency moved to prospective billing in 2015, they chose to leave the Gateway to focus on their own internal transition. Bringing BWC back onto the Gateway is a possibility for a future addition.

Additional Requested Enhancements

Enhancement Topic: Access & Security

- Ability to upload power of attorney document to provide greater access to filers, like California
- TBOR lines to OBG
- Individual (i.e., not just business) ability to file with OBG
- Ability as a service provider to print a list of all of the businesses for which I am authorized, the level of authorization (filer, non-filer, filing administrator), the service areas for which I'm authorized, and the transactions for which I'm authorized.
- Ability as a service provider to create groups for my employees, then to request access to a business for the group. If CSH group member requests access to a client and access is granted, I would like all members of that group to be given access.
- Ability as an employer to more easily manage users. I want to select a role for each person, not toggle between roles. I want all employees on one screen or a downloadable list.
- Ability as a service provider to know which businesses (clients) my employees have access to.

Enhancement Topic: Business Account Dropdown

- Too easy to be in the wrong taxpayer. In other systems after you login, you are forced to choose a client. That makes it much easier to ensure you are in the right client.
- Drop down of clients is very small – it's too easy to click on the wrong client when you have two similar named employers.
- Only a small bar telling you what client you are in – there should be a main screen with all clients listed. Once complete, you go back to the "home" main screen. Less chance of mix up.
- When selecting a client, I want to go directly to that client without having to select "Go". I need assurance that I am on the right client.

Enhancement Topic: Email

- When an email is sent to a client indicating that a request for access has been made, I would like for it to contain the company associated with the person making the request And to have a hyperlink "click here to authorize." Alternatively, the email should at least have instruction on how to authorize access.

- The new Gateway generates an abundant amount of email; when a firm has a new employee that needs access, they have to request access from individual clients. Clients then get generic email that doesn't identify the firm so they then have to follow-up to find out who this person requesting access is.

Enhancement Topic: Reports

- As a service provider, I would like to have the ability to query the system across ALL of my clients. For instance, be able to determine if any of my clients have not filed an IT-941, or a state withholding FORM IT-501 for the month of October.

Enhancement Topic: Receipts & History

- I would like to be able to print a list of filings, payments, etc without having to print the individual filings by separately accessing each one.
- Printing filed returns from the receipt screen at end of checkout
- Possibly print multiple transactions on one page.
- When you look in the history, the local withholding payments show 1/1/18 – 12/31/18, as the period and makes it hard to find the one you are looking for.

Enhancement Topic: Checkout & Payment

- I would like the ability to save routing and account numbers for payments
- The old system would show the bank name after the routing number was entered. This was a great double check to make sure that things were entered properly
- At Checkout, bank account number is no longer displayed at all. How can one be certain the account number was correctly entered?
- During the checkout process, I would like to be able to click on the pop up that shows items in checkout instead of having to actually click on the checkout process.
- Postdate all payments to due date (in future)
- Withholding transactions do not allow for deferred payment: For clients that have to pay their state withholding with each pay, we obviously process the payroll before the pay date. The new OBG will not allow us to select that processing period before the actual date. We are forced to hold the payment until a few days after we process it and then go back in. This causes inefficiencies as well as opening us up to missing payments.