

Company name: Horchata LLC

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Application name: **OhioOPT**

As a company comprised of mostly F-1 students, Horchata LLC recognizes the challenges that soon-to-graduate international students face when securing tech jobs. Many F-1 students aiming for roles in software engineering, web development, quality assurance, and UX design struggle to find paid OPT opportunities due to immigration constraints, a highly competitive tech job market, and limited access to employer networks. This often leads students to settle for unpaid roles or delay their career progression.

At the same time, small and mid-cap tech companies in Ohio have numerous job openings but struggle to attract international talent due to a lack of visibility behind big tech job postings. With this realization, we plan to build **OhioOPT** – a web application that helps F-1 students in STEM connect with paid OPT roles at tech companies in Ohio. Our platform bridges this gap by leveraging alumni networks, personal referrals, and “hidden gem” local companies to boost job placement rates, recognizing that connections significantly improve hiring success.

Our target users are graduating F-1 students in STEM fields seeking affordable living and paid roles that enhance their career profiles for future job applications or graduate school admissions. Cities like Columbus and Cleveland provide a lower cost of living while still offering strong professional and social networks. By focusing on community-driven hiring and localized job visibility, our platform ensures F-1 students can secure meaningful, paid work in Ohio, setting them up for long-term success. In return, this talent pool will make the local tech scene more vibrant and innovative.

Feature	How it works
LinkedIn integration	Allows users to sync their profiles, showcasing their experience, skills, and projects directly on OhioOPT. Maybe making it easier for employers to assess candidates at a glance, increasing visibility and improving hiring success.

Display the user's experiences + projects + social links profile	Users can create a personalized profile highlighting their work experience, projects, skills, and social links (LinkedIn, GitHub, portfolio, etc.). This feature helps F-1 students present a strong professional identity to Ohio-based employers and alumni, increasing their chances of getting noticed for paid OPT opportunities. Employers can easily review profiles to identify potential candidates, fostering faster, connection-driven hiring.
Edit & customize personal profile	Users can edit and personalize their profiles by adding their work experience, projects, skills, and social links. This feature allows them to showcase their strengths, update information as they gain new experiences, and present themselves in the best way to recruiters and hiring managers. A user might have options to have multiple resumes saved for different kinds of positions and easily load whichever one needed or We might consider adding extra customization option for accessibility and building user rapport.
Display a visualized database of curated jobs, including representative's contact information & link to apply to the role	A visualized, easy-to-navigate job board featuring curated paid OPT opportunities from Ohio-based tech companies. Each listing includes key details such as job descriptions, application links, and direct contact information for hiring representatives or alumni. This feature streamlines the job search process by reducing cold applications and enabling more personal, connection-driven outreach, increasing the chances of securing a role.
Connect with the company's representative via messaging	Users can chat within the platform or send emails to company representatives, making it easier to get noticed and improve their chances of landing a job. We are still debating this feature as we realize that creating an extra touchpoint for communication makes it inconvenient for hiring managers while we're trying to make this process more frictionless.
Display an OPT helper Timeline	The OPT Compliance & Helper feature is designed to assist international students in maintaining their visa status while navigating employment in the U.S. It ensures that users stay compliant with USCIS regulations by providing automated tracking, timely reminders, and guidance on reporting requirements.