

## PLANNING your onboarding program

Managers and supervisors, along with human resource professionals, should answer some key planning questions before implementing an onboarding program or revamping a current orientation program. Some key questions to consider include:

- How will we obtain commitment from upper management?
- What are the objectives of our onboarding program?
- How will our onboarding program “live” the EVP?
- What do new employees need to know about state government that would make them more comfortable?
- What do new employees need to know about the work environment that would make them more comfortable?
- How will the program differ for those employees who are in the central office versus those who are in a field location?
- What impression and impact do you want to have on a new employee's first day?
- What key policies and procedures should an employee be aware of on the first day?
- What positive experience can you provide for the new employee that he or she could discuss with their family at the end of the first day of work?
- What role will human resources play and what role will the new employee's supervisor play? How will coworkers and others be involved?
- Who will make sure the employee's desk, work area, equipment, special instructions, telephone number, email address, etc. are ready for the employee on the first day?
- What will be the duration of your onboarding program?
- What will be the phases of the program – first day, first week, first month, etc.?
- How will you measure your program's success?
- How will you obtain feedback?

## **TOOLS** for getting started

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There is no second chance to make a first impression. Here are a few basic tips to get you thinking about what tools will work best for your agency.

### **BEGIN** the onboarding process as soon as the new employee accepts your offer

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Welcome, welcome, welcome. You never get a second chance to make a first impression. Touch base periodically between the time the employee has accepted your offer and their first day of work to answer any questions they may have.

### **START** with the basics and add information as you go along

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Start with the basics and add information as you go along.

People become productive sooner if they are firmly grounded in the basic knowledge they need to understand their job. Do not overwhelm them with too much information. Provide information in bite-size chunks.

### **HAVE** some fun

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Coming up with games or other fun ideas can help people learn, get them acquainted with others and help them enjoy their first few days.

### **KEEP** the new person's family in mind

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A new job means adjustment for the entire family, especially if they have relocated. Think of ways to involve the new employee's family.

### **ASK** for feedback

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Find out from former new hires how they perceived the orientation process, and do not be afraid to make changes based on those recommendations. Several months after the employee has started work, ask them if the onboarding process is meeting their needs. After the employee has worked for your organization for a while, they will find out what they should have learned but did not earlier. Use surveys, one-on-one interviews and focus groups. Feedback is critical to the continuous improvement of your onboarding program.

## CONTINUOUS improvement

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What works today may not serve your employees well next month or next year. Change your onboarding program as needed.

## METRICS

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Measuring the impact of your onboarding program will help you gain support from upper management and will alert you to make changes to the program when needed. Measure the impact of your program through such dashboards as new hire turnover, time to productivity and satisfaction and engagement.

An effective onboarding program - or the lack of one - will make a significant difference in how quickly new employees become engaged, committed, and productive. Ensure new employees want to return the next day, and the next, and the next...

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