

# Organizational Onboarding

*Setting the Stage for Continued Employee Satisfaction, Productivity and Organization Success*



# Onboarding



## What is Onboarding?

Onboarding is a set of actions taken by an employer in order to help a newly hired employee adjust to his or her role, coworkers and an organization's work environment and culture. Sometimes referred to as organizational socialization, the process of onboarding follows a variety of techniques to lead to positive hiring outcomes.

New employees need instruction and assistance when it comes to learning what is expected of them in their new roles, but their training shouldn't stop there. Integrate employees into the existing social and cultural structure of the Indian Health Service (IHS) as an organization, as well as your specific Indian health site and Tribal community. When a new health care professional is able to quickly learn the attitudes, behaviors and culture relevant to your site, he or she will make a smooth transition into the new role and soon begin to contribute to the IHS mission.

Making your new hires feel prepared for their roles and welcomed into the culture can affect productivity and longevity, allowing the employees to greatly contribute to the American Indian and Alaska Native health communities with whom they are serving.

Oftentimes onboarding is a formal process, including an orientation program and welcome materials. While formal onboarding is important, the informal aspects of your employee's first day on a new job should be given an equal amount of attention. Is someone there to greet the employee when he or she arrives? Is the health care professional immediately set up with the materials needed to perform his or her job? Is the employee shown around the site or community by a supervisor? Who will address new hire concerns? The first day with a new employee is like a first date – the time during which all first and lasting impressions are made. Because research indicates that many employees decide whether they will stay with an organization during the first two weeks of employment, the first impression is absolutely critical in retaining an employee.<sup>1</sup>

Your plan to integrate the new employee into your facility and Tribal community should begin immediately following his or her acceptance of the job offer. Onboarding begins when new employees are hired but doesn't end with the completion of their first day on the job. In order to successfully integrate new employees into the organization and Tribal culture, the onboarding process should last at least six months. When actions and communications between new employees and an organization are carefully planned during this period, employees are more likely to build strong relationships with coworkers and the community, produce powerful work and contribute to organizational culture. The supervisor, human resources department and benefits and payroll department are each an integral part of making a new employee onboarding program a success. Providing a successful onboarding program can help your employees turn their new jobs into long-term Indian health careers within your organization.



<sup>1</sup> Bauer, T. N. (2010). *Onboarding New Employees: Maximizing Success*. Retrieved from Society for Human Resource Management Foundation website: [www.shrm.org/about/foundation/products/pages/onboardingepg.aspx](http://www.shrm.org/about/foundation/products/pages/onboardingepg.aspx)



## The Benefits of Onboarding

Making an investment in your clinicians is making an investment in both your IHS site and the Indian health community. Implementing an employee onboarding program that reflects the mission and culture of IHS will increase employee retention and drive productivity, allowing employees to make a positive impact on the well-being of the American Indian and Alaska Native population.

### Employee Benefits

- Helps the new employee feel welcome and comfortable in both your site and the Tribal community.
- Provides insight into the IHS mission, vision and values.
- Helps the employee understand all IHS policies, procedures and structure.
- Aids an employee in having a clear understanding of job performance expectations.
- Establishes clear communication between the supervisor and employee.
- Helps an employee build relationships with his or her coworkers and community.

### Benefits for Your IHS Site

- Helps employees make valuable contributions to the IHS culture and mission.
- Can reduce new employee adjustment time by two months.<sup>2</sup>
- Creates employee investment in IHS and the Tribal community.
- Reduces employee turnover by up to 25 percent.<sup>3</sup>
- Strengthens teamwork between coworkers for increased productivity.
- Saves communication time between the supervisor and employee.
- Saves money – one in five health care workers leaves their job each year. Replacing just one experienced nurse can cost up to \$120,000, so avoiding employee turnover saves valuable resources.
- Providing continuity of care reduces errors and increases patient satisfaction.



## How to Structure an Onboarding Program

The best way to acclimate a new hire to your facility, staff, patients and the entire Indian health community is to establish onboarding initiation practices set at specific times during the hiring process, such as prior to the start date; the participant's first day on the job; and during the participant's first week on the job. It's a significant task to ensure not only the continuity of care your patients expect and deserve but also to establish a culture of comfort, understanding and belonging for the new hire among your facility and staff. This is a crucial first step in encouraging new and existing employees to consider long-term Indian health careers within your organization.

The following pages outline specific tasks and activities to follow when welcoming a new hire to your organization. The most successful hires are well acclimated at the start; are introduced to key members of staff and senior management with whom he or she will be working alongside; and have a comprehensive understanding of the organization's mission and his or her role in fulfilling that mission. By following these onboarding procedures, you can ensure that your new hires are ready to take on their roles from the start and will stay committed and dedicated to your organization for the long term.

<sup>2</sup> Lee, D. (2005). *Successful Onboarding: How to Get Your New Employees Started Off Right*. Retrieved from HumanNature@Work website: [www.humannatureatwork.com/SuccessfulOnboarding.pdf](http://www.humannatureatwork.com/SuccessfulOnboarding.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> ASHHA (2011, January 12). *Attracting, Onboarding and Retaining Employees Within the Health Care Industry*. Retrieved from [www.naylor-network.com/ahh-nwl/articles/index-v2.asp?aid=134767&issueID=22500](http://www.naylor-network.com/ahh-nwl/articles/index-v2.asp?aid=134767&issueID=22500)



## 1

### Prior to the Start Date

Welcoming an employee to your Indian health facility and paving the way for long-term success is easy if you set up an action plan that appropriately addresses his or her ability to succeed within the organization from the start. Your plan to integrate the employee into your facility should begin immediately following his or her acceptance of the job offer and incorporate the essential steps below.

#### ACTION

One of the most important documents a new hire needs is an official letter of hire detailing the position, responsibilities, salary and specific hiring terms. This letter provides official documentation of employment, which is necessary for mortgage lenders, school enrollment, health insurance, benefits and utility activation, as well as other key tasks needed to settle in. Include a "Welcome" letter and an information packet containing details about the facility, community (background, traditions, observances), local site amenities (housing, transportation, schools, businesses, services, etc.) and other pertinent information about your site. Send this one month prior to the new hire coming on board and include a point of contact such as a liaison or mentor at the facility.

Identify staff with similar responsibilities to function as the new employee's coach/mentor for work-related processes and procedures.

Notify your IT department of the new hire and arrange to have all the necessary technology and telecommunications equipment set up prior to the new hire's arrival (computer, email, phone, beeper, etc.).

Prepare the new hire's work area with any necessary office supplies prior to his or her arrival date.

Add the new employee to the department and/or unit's organizational contact and routing lists within a week of his or her reporting date.

Schedule the new employee's first week activities and prepare his or her agenda, including identifying key contacts (and their titles and information) with whom he or she should meet.

Send an introductory email to staff announcing the new employee's arrival, function and location.

Make plans to have lunch with the new employee or arrange to have lunch brought in to the facility for a "meet and greet" with the staff on the first day.

#### TO BE COMPLETED BY

CEO/Clinical Director/Supervisor

CEO/Clinical Director/Supervisor

CEO/Clinical Director/Supervisor/  
IT Department

CEO/Clinical Director/Supervisor

CEO/Clinical Director/Supervisor

CEO/Clinical Director/Supervisor

CEO/Clinical Director/Supervisor

CEO/Clinical Director/Supervisor

## 2

### The First Day

While a new job is exciting, it can also bring first-day jitters and be overwhelming trying to remember names, learn new processes and navigate the new facility. You can help alleviate these concerns by putting the new hire at ease, assuring him or her that an organization chart is available to use as a "who's who" resource and to map out each team within each department. Also, let the new hire know that you have an open-door policy should he or she have any questions or concerns. In doing so, you will immediately establish a sense of value and an understanding that your support is always available. Also, take the first day to confirm the new hire's schedule, daily responsibilities and, if applicable, any previously agreed-upon telecommuting arrangement and then share that information with the HR department representative responsible for going over the new hire's employee orientation. It's important to let the employee know that he or she should allow a few hours that first day to go over all of the necessary documentation and employment benefits with HR.

#### ACTION

Be available to personally greet the new employee as he or she arrives. Schedule meetings, conferences and phone calls for later in the day.

Personally lead the new employee through a tour of the facility. Orient him or her to specific locations, such as the:

- Lunch/break room.
- Bathrooms
- Conference rooms.
- Office equipment and supplies.
- Parking

Introduce the new employee to the HR representative responsible for going over all paperwork, benefits, etc.

Introduce the new employee to all staff and the chosen mentor with whom he or she will work alongside.

Orient the new hire to all technology:

- Phone/intercom systems.
- Computer system.
- Accounting or billing software.
- Time-management software.
- Meeting schedules.

Introduce the new employee to the executive staff: CEO (if other than the supervisor), CMO, CFO, etc., to acquaint him or her with management and to serve as a welcome to the entire facility team.

#### TO BE COMPLETED BY

CEO/Clinical Director/Supervisor

CEO/Clinical Director/Supervisor

CEO/HR Representative

CEO/Clinical Director/Supervisor

CEO/Clinical Director/Supervisor/  
IT Department

CEO/Clinical Director/Supervisor





## 3

### The First Week

Orientation sessions are equally essential to Indian health programs because they address IHS' policies and procedures, Tribal affiliations and any new-hire concerns. They also help staff members form accurate expectations about the job they've just taken on. Performing the tasks below will ensure that your new employees are fully onboard right from the beginning.

ACTION	TO BE COMPLETED BY
Meet to review and discuss the IHS orientation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The IHS mission</li> <li>• Introduction to IHS (IHS 101)</li> <li>• Employee ethics.</li> <li>• Communication modes.</li> <li>• Customer service.</li> </ul>	Supervisor
Identify training and development activities needed within the first six months and sign up the new employee for appropriate classes.	Supervisor
Set performance expectations and discuss how and when the employee will be evaluated.	Supervisor
Review and discuss the employee's first week, answer his or her questions and solicit his or her feedback.	Supervisor
Cultural immersion (Indian health community, heritage, traditions, ceremonies).	Supervisor/Community Liaison

## 4

### Within the First Six Months

Inspiring a new employee to want to remain at your Indian health facility is an ongoing task. Retention is a process that must be actively nurtured and developed during the tenure of each employee. This includes giving your employees the attention they require and deserve, offering encouragement and support, acknowledging a job well done and ensuring that he or she has a voice within your organization and that his or her input – as well as the input of all staff members – is key to the success of your facility. In short – give your employees a reason to stay!

ACTION	TO BE COMPLETED BY
Check in regularly with the new employee to see if there are any questions or concerns. Provide feedback often – including positive reinforcement.	CEO/Clinical Director/Supervisor
Schedule a six-month new-hire evaluation.	Supervisor
Provide monthly feedback to new employees regarding their job performance, including a formal performance evaluation in their third month.	Supervisor
Celebrate each new hire's six-month anniversary with a planned lunch or other form of recognition.	CEO/Clinical Director/Supervisor





## Onboarding Best Practices

Developing and implementing a strategic onboarding plan is worth the investment. Successful onboarding creates a domino effect. Properly welcoming a new hire and giving him or her the tools to be successful produces meaningful work that leads to the employee making a positive impact on the facility and community. With the successful recruitment and onboarding of new employees and the retention of existing employees, the cycle repeats.

- Begin onboarding as soon as the new employee receives an offer letter.
- Design and implement formal onboarding plans and orientation programs.
- Ensure the supervisor participates fully in the programs.
- Monitor the progress and success of the onboarding program using 30-day milestones.
- Encourage the use of available technology whenever possible for job-related tasks.
- Use easy-to-decipher language and clearly communicate expectations.

## Evaluating Your Onboarding Program

- How do you make new hires feel welcome?
- How do you convey that employees matter?
- Is your orientation program interactive and thought-provoking?
- Have you written material from a new employee's perspective?
- Do you have mentors available?
- Are you available to communicate regularly with your new hire?
- Are you assisting supervisors and managers in the onboarding process?
- Is your orientation easy to understand?
- Has anyone been assigned as the new employee point of contact (liaison)?

## Using Technology in Your Onboarding Program

- Send a welcome email before the new employee's first day on the job.
- Send introduction emails to every member of staff who will interact with the new hire.
- Create a special place online for new hires to learn about IHS and the facility environment and culture and to prepare for their first day.
- Provide a place online for new hires to fill out necessary paperwork so that they won't be overwhelmed with administrative tasks on the first day.
- Invite new hires to participate in appropriate social networks.
- Set up the new hire's calendar with important meetings he or she will need to attend within the first week.
- Use virtual resources from successful programs in other agencies like the onboarding road maps from [www.ssp.navy.mil](http://www.ssp.navy.mil).



## Onboarding Success Stories

Launching and implementing an employee onboarding program can be challenging. For your reference, we've included descriptions of onboarding programs run with great success by both federal and private agencies. These onboarding strategies set the stage for meaningful, productive work from new employees and encouraged strong employee relationships. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) refers to each program mentioned below as a quality example of onboarding best practices.<sup>4</sup>

### EXAMPLE 1

#### THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION (NSF) —

Implemented an executive onboarding program with the primary goal of helping new employees understand the unique aspects of NSF culture and team dynamics by capitalizing on the personality and leadership skills of the incoming employee. The organization chose to pursue this goal by implementing a mentorship program, forming team workshops, making role coaching available and providing leadership retreats.

### EXAMPLE 2

#### JOHNSON & JOHNSON, CANADA —

Provided an onboarding coach to create an individualized dashboard for each new hire. The coach worked with the employee for six months after his or her start date. In addition to the onboarding coach, a mentor other than a supervisor was also provided. The organization asked that all leaders participate in transition workshops and help plan onboarding. At the end of the six-month onboarding period, feedback on the onboarding process was gathered to monitor any transition adjustments.

### EXAMPLE 3

#### THE US DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY —

Designed and implemented an onboarding program to meet the following goals for each new employee:

- Accelerate adjustment time in the new job.
- Clarify performance goals.
- Quickly adjust to the cultural and political landscape.
- Identify stakeholders.
- Use mentors, coaches and strategic networks.
- Pursue an active role in individual learning.

The Navy offered learning sessions for employees who had been with the department less than three years, as well as flash mentoring sessions and onboarding programs tailored to each individual. Employee evaluations at the end of the onboarding period helped determine the success of the program.

<sup>4</sup> Office of Personnel Management (2014). Executive Onboarding - Training and Development Policy Wiki. Retrieved from [www.opm.gov/wiki/training/New-Employee-Orientation.ashx](http://www.opm.gov/wiki/training/New-Employee-Orientation.ashx)

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