

Tips for Effective Remote Onboarding of New Hires

To effectively onboard new hires remotely, work with your agency's IT department to determine technological capabilities and security parameters. If agency-issued cell phones, laptops and other devices are not available, consider the pros and cons of asking new hires to use their personal devices and internet connection for work.

After considering HIPAA, Personally Identifiable Information and Protected Health Information concerns, the agency may use document sharing, conference calls and virtual meeting tools like GoToMeeting, FreeConferenceCall.com, Zoom, Skype, Lync and Google Hangout. If the employee is unable to use agency-issued or personal devices for work, the agency must determine what printed documents can be shared with new hires and how to distribute them.

Ongoing communication between the new hire, supervisor, human resources, IT and other departments will ensure successful and inclusive onboarding. The supervisor and human resources should coordinate to develop weekly and daily activity plans that incorporate a job-specific training plan. Additionally, the new hire's supervisor should be able to account for the employee's productivity. If telecommuting and telework are new for your agency, you may use the Division of State Human Resources telecommuting resources as references to create your own guidelines.

Sample activity plan:

Week 1: Orientation, agency acclimation, new hire paperwork and policy review and acknowledgments.

Week 2: One-on-one job-specific training with supervisor and mentor.

Week 3: Individual assignments with check-ins from supervisor and mentor. Research project or process improvement project.

Daily: Morning conference call with supervisor, mentor or entire work group to share announcements and discuss daily activities, goals and progress.

Day 1:

If possible, conduct an in-person one-on-one orientation with the supervisor. If this is not possible, hold a welcome call with the supervisor and mentor. Human resources may use virtual conferencing to conduct orientation.

- Complete I-9.
- Tour the work area virtually, if accessible.
- Review the position description.
- Discuss work expectations and give an overview of the agency and department.
- Assign agency-issued work equipment and share virtual access login information.
- Review IT policies, telecommuting guidelines, and weekly and daily work plans.
- Provide new hire paperwork to be completed at home.

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Day 2:

- Complete new hire paperwork.
- Review PEBA and other benefits websites.
- Coordinate with HR to schedule a benefits consultation.
- Review and acknowledge agency policies using SCEIS Central or another tool. The agency may consider using video conferencing to deliver live training sessions.

Day 3:

- Virtual benefits consultation.
- Complete SCEIS ESS training and MSS training if applicable.
- Finish remaining agency policy reviews and acknowledgements using SCEIS Central or another tool. The agency may consider using video conferencing to deliver live training sessions.

Day 4:

- Review agency internet and intranet pages, news releases, organizational chart and the agency's accountability report. Encourage the new hire to make a list of questions for points of discussion with their mentor. Help the new hire understand how their role relates to the agency's mission and values and departmental goals.

Day 5:

- Review department Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and regulations/policies directly related to the employee's job. Ask the employee to create visual workflows for each written SOP.
- Share samples of work from the area for the new hire to review. Encourage the employee to make a list of questions for points of discussion with their mentor.

Day 6:

- Continue to review department SOPs and regulations/policies directly related to the employee's job. Ask the employee to create visual workflows for each written SOP.
- Share samples of work from the area for the new hire to review. Encourage the employee to make a list of questions for points of discussion with their mentor.
- Conference call with supervisor or mentor to answer questions and provide clarification.

Day 7:

- Conference calls with each member of the work area to understand how each employee's roles are related.
- Phone introductions with others outside of the area that the employee may need to coordinate with to complete work assignments.
- One-on-one or group training with mentor and other appropriate trainers. Using Lync, Skype or some other platform, the mentor or trainer can share his or her computer screen with the new hire to show them how to complete assignments.

Day 8:

- More one-on-one or group training with mentor and other appropriate trainers.
- Individual work assignments.

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Day 9:

- Additional training as needed.
- Individual work assignments.

Day 10:

- Additional training as needed.
- Individual work assignments.

Depending on their role, the agency may consider asking the employee to come into the office during designated office hours one or more days each week while ensuring appropriate social distancing protocols are followed.

It is important to explain to the new hire that telecommuting arrangements are expected to be short term and the agency will continue to monitor guidance from health officials and the need for remote work arrangements. Employees may be required to return to regular in-office work at any time. Agencies should also consider workers compensation and OSHA requirements for employees who work from home.