



eBook

# Engage and Retain New Hires in Your Local Government with Proper Onboarding





HR



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## INTRODUCTION

We all know what it feels like to be the new employee in the office: unnerving, unsettling, and uncertain. Where's the fax machine? How do you order business cards? Where is the "Main" conference room? Data shows that the more thorough a new employee's onboarding process, the more secure he will feel in his new role, the more comfortable he will feel with his coworkers and supervisor, and the more effective and efficient he'll be early on. Most importantly, effective onboarding leads to job satisfaction, and ultimately, retention. What this means for human resource (HR) managers, is that the strength of your onboarding process is crucial to your goal of retaining the best talent in your community.

## INSIDE THIS EBOOK

This eBook will outline the importance of proper onboarding, and provide you with a 30-day checklist customized for local government HR managers. Use our checklist both within your HR department, and as a shared tool with department managers, to ensure you are giving new hires the support they need to become comfortable, engaged, and effective members of your local government administration.

**For municipalities feeling the pressure of limited time and limited resources, government HR software with an integrated onboarding component helps HR departments of all sizes streamline and automate key components of their new hire workflows to enable successful new hire transitions.**

## **THE INITIAL 30-DAY WINDOW**

Experts agree that effective onboarding practices during the first 90 days after a new employee is hired are critical to helping him adjust to the expectations of his new position, and to build positive working relationships with team members and co-workers. It is the responsibility of HR managers to lead the new employee onboarding efforts in local government administrations, and to give hiring managers the tools they need to continue those efforts at the department level.

### **The Risks**

According to TLNT, one third of new hires quit their job after about six months. When new employees are not given the tools and training they need to be successful and feel confident in their new roles, they are left feeling unsatisfied. Ultimately, new employees not properly onboarded are less successful, which puts your administration at greater risk of attrition.



Local governments, including their human resource departments, are often structured to operate with lean staffing models. One of the most common reasons that HR and department managers fail to properly onboard new employees is because of the perceived amount of time needed to do it properly. Busy, understaffed departments are more inclined to simply begin assigning tasks to new staff members from day one, with the hope of making a dent in the team's "to-do" pile. In these cases, busy managers feel they can't spare time on lengthy training and team building.

### **The Rewards**

What busy HR and department managers don't realize however, is that spending time up front with a new employee, will save their administration money long-term. Since employees who receive proper onboarding are less likely to turnover, municipalities are less likely to lose money on re-hiring and re-training.

Another benefit of proper onboarding, is improved employee performance. According to The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), effective onboarding increases employee performance by up to 11 percent. While managers may feel the best way to enable their new hires to be effective is to immediately begin treating them like a tenured employee, this tactic is counterproductive, and supervisors would be better served investing time initially in proper onboarding and training.



### **Don't Forget About Culture**

The final, often overlooked yet essential factor in proper onboarding, is the affect it can have on a new hire's comfort in the company, socially. Employees who feel like they are part of the team and are accepted by their coworkers are also less likely to turnover. According to The Aberdeen Group, two thirds of companies with onboarding programs reported a higher rate of successful assimilation of new hires into company culture, and 54 percent reported higher employee engagement.

In addition to encouraging new employees to get to know their coworkers, HR managers should also make an effort to teach new hires about the mission, vision, and values of their community. When employees feel that their work is making a difference in their community, they are more satisfied, and less likely to start a new job search.

Remember, onboarding is not just a day-one orientation. It's a long-term commitment to assimilate new staff over their first 90-days. To ensure you have a successful initial onboarding plan, use our local government new employee onboarding checklist to enable your new hire to get onboard, and on-point, ASAP.



## YOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEW EMPLOYEE ONBOARDING CHECKLIST

### BEFORE THE EMPLOYEE'S START DATE

- Provide to the employee necessary onboarding documentation, giving the employee time to return any documents that must be completed or signed. To mitigate paperwork, provide as much information digitally as possible. Onboarding documents should include:
  - Welcome letter
  - Performance profile (Note: this should be the same performance profile used when the position was advertised, and when the employee was interviewed to ensure expectations are aligned).
  - Employee handbook, office dress code policy, and Internet use policy.
  - Emergency contact form (to be kept on file with HR).
  - Health benefit options and enrollment forms.
  - Retirement plan information and enrollment forms.
  - Payroll, direct deposit, I-9 and other tax deduction paperwork.
- Confirm the new employee's start date, desk/office location.
- Confirm where the employee will park.
- Coordinate the production of keys, badges, and access cards, as needed.
- Depending on the employee's role, order business cards. Ideally the cards should be available by the employee's first day.
- Order the employee's nameplate, if necessary, ideally to be complete before the employee's first day.
- Clean and prepare the employee's office/desk/workspace.
- If the employee will need a computer, work with your IT department to have it set up at the employee's desk, with necessary software installed.
- Work with your IT department to install a desk phone, and/or issue a smart phone or tablet if needed.
- Confirm if the employee has any disabilities or impairments that will require special accommodations (e.g., handicapped parking, screen reader, an ergonomic keyboard, etc.).
- If the employee will be driving or operating municipal vehicles, prepare the necessary paperwork.
- If the employee will be required to attend regular meetings, add meetings to his/her calendar.
- Add the employee to any necessary email distribution lists.
- Schedule any training or introductory meetings with key personnel for the first two weeks.
- Communicate internally to any staff or departments who will need to be aware of the new employee. Be sure to provide information regarding his/her role, and provide his/her contact information.





## THE FIRST DAY

- ❑ Provide set up instructions (if necessary) for the employee's: computer, email, desk phone, mobile devices, intranets, and any other software or hardware necessary for the employee's role.
- ❑ Provide a tour of the office in which the employee will be working, pointing out key areas such as the restrooms, printer, fax machines, etc.
- ❑ Explain completion of timesheet for exempt employees.
- ❑ Ensure the employee's direct supervisor meets with him/her, one-on-one, for a formal onboarding discussion. This is an opportunity for the supervisor to:
  - Communicate expectations.
  - Answer initial questions.
  - Provide an initial assignment.
  - Explain the performance review and goal-setting process, and provide access to performance review software for goal tracking and analysis.
- ❑ Provide building safety instructions and emergency protocols.
- ❑ Schedule a one-on-one, or team lunch for the employee's first day. This will offer an opportunity for staff to get to know one another, and will make the new employee feel welcome.

## THE FIRST WEEK

- ❑ Depending on the new employee's role, coordinate for a headshot to be taken, and ask your communications office to write and distribute a press release to appropriate media outlets.
- ❑ Coordinate for a member of your team to take the new employee on a community tour, being sure to point out municipal buildings and department locations.

## AFTER THE FIRST MONTH

- ❑ Send the employee a 30-day onboarding satisfaction survey. Be sure to use the feedback or suggestions to improve your processes moving forward.



### **AUTOMATED EMPLOYEE ONBOARDING FROM CIVICHR**

CivicHR's employee onboarding solution is a cloud-based new hire documentation and communication platform that streamlines your workflows for new employee transitions, helping you to easily complete each checklist item on time. With effective onboarding, new employees become impactful team players faster, improving overall team production and success. Visit our website at [CivicHR.com](http://CivicHR.com) for more information.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR - JONATHAN WIERSMA**

As the General Manager for CivicHR, Jonathan understands the challenges that human resource professionals in local government face when looking to recruit, identify, and hire the best talent in their community, for their community. Jonathan's primary focus at CivicPlus is on following the trends in the local government human resource landscape, and leading product enhancements for CivicHR to ensure the solution evolves as the needs of local government evolve. Jonathan holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration. He has over fifteen years of experience in software research and development, client service, product implementations, sales, and marketing.