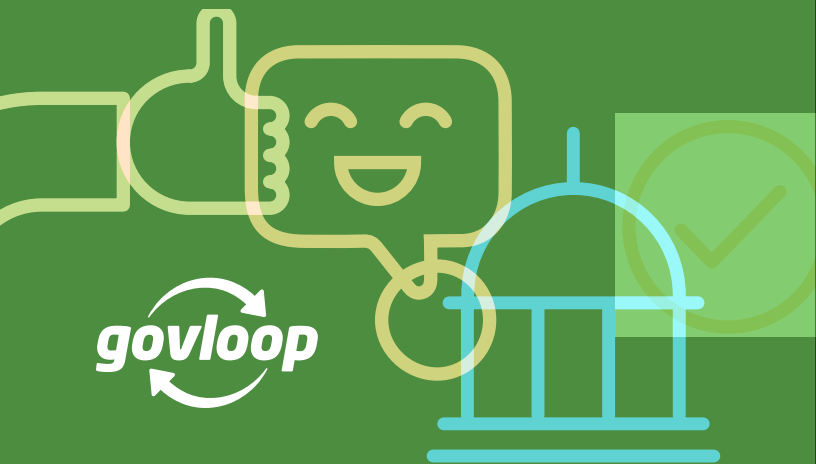
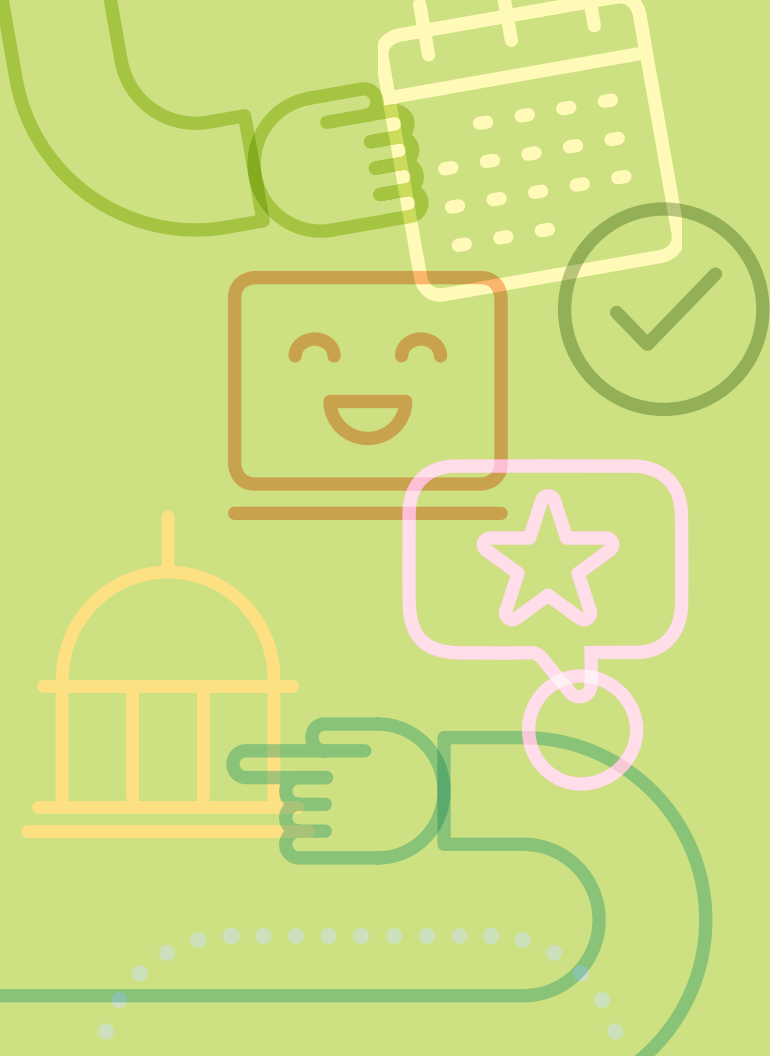


# Your Guide to Effective Onboarding in Government



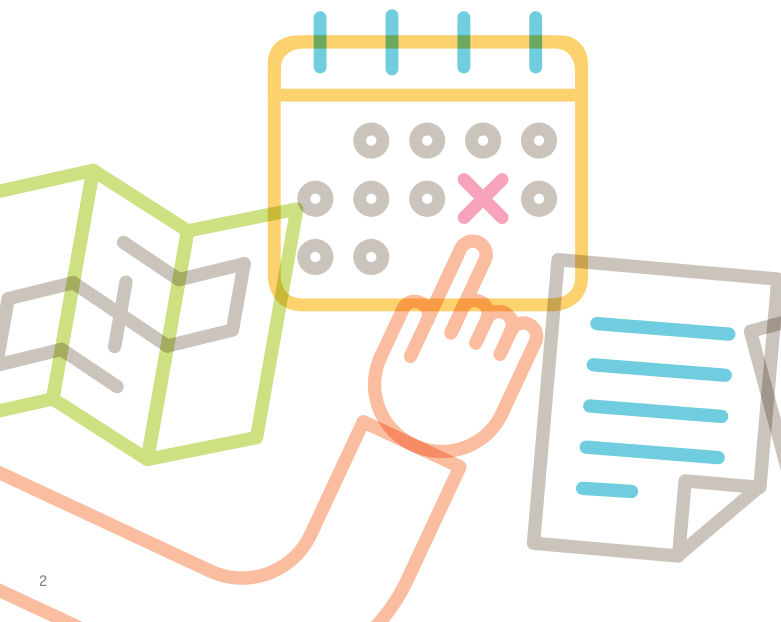


Everyone has been onboarded to a new company or job at some point in their professional careers. If you've ever held a professional position, you've gone through an onboarding process. Sometimes these experiences are pleasant and valuable, but other times onboarding can be painful and unhelpful.

A good onboarding experience should leave an employee prepared and excited to start their new role. We've broken down this process so you can follow the steps to help most successfully onboard new employees before they start, during their first week, and through the first few months.

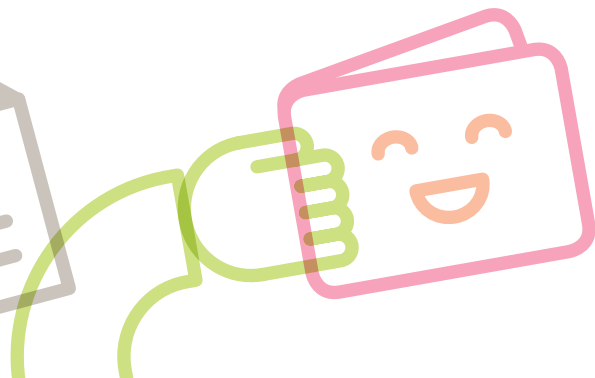
**Follow this guide to make your agency's onboarding experience more effective.**

# Before the First Day



## Send them helpful information and materials

Put together a welcome packet and email it to the new employee. The packet should include things like the job description, a welcome letter, important contact names and information, an office map, parking and transportation information, dress code, and any information about the agency they should look over before starting the position. Also, consider having the new employee's manager send over a friendly note with the welcome packet so they are excited, informed and ready for their first day. This will help set an enthusiastic tone for their first day. It is also helpful to send HR paperwork ahead of time, if you can. **This way, new employees will be able to hit the ground running on the first day and not be bogged down by administrative tasks.**



## Create an agenda for their first day

**There's nothing worse than walking into the first day on a new job and not having anything to do.** In order to avoid this, you should provide the new employee with a first day schedule in the welcome email or have it ready on their desk when they start. The agenda should include time for a tour of the office, meeting the team, any mandatory trainings, and getting IT materials set up. If you can, also include lunch plans with their team or assign them an onboarding buddy so they aren't at a loss for what to do when noon comes.



## Get their work station ready

**Setting up an employee's workspace before they start gives them a sense of confidence and designates their own space in the office.** This is key to showing new employees that your agency cares and wants them to start off their new position on the right foot. Fill their desk with any necessary supplies and provide hard copies of important documents, like an organizational chart, employee handbook, and new hire paperwork. Not only are these documents helpful and informative but it gives the new employee something to leaf through when they have a little down time.



# During the First Week

An abstract graphic consisting of several thick, rounded lines in yellow, pink, green, and blue. These lines originate from the left side of the page and extend towards the right, where they terminate in stylized hand icons. The hands are also colored to match their respective lines: yellow, pink, green, and blue. The lines and hands are arranged in a way that suggests movement and flow across the page.

## Give them an orientation

Ideally, an orientation should take place on the first day but if this isn't possible, it should occur at some point in the employee's first week. While it may be tempting to throw the new employee into projects as quickly as possible, they will be more successful at navigating their new position if they first have a lay of the land. Make sure you give an overview of the organization as a whole, as well as their specific department, set up time for them to meet other teams, and go over how they fit into their team and department. This makes it easy for the new hire to understand how their goals and key performance indicators can affect other teams. **Contextualizing the position for the new employee allows them to spend less time figuring out what is going on at the organization and more time getting started on initial projects.**

## Plan a manager meeting

**Similar to orientation, try setting a manager meeting as soon as possible after the employee starts.** Use this time to allow the new employee and their manager to get to know each other, share management and work styles, and explain expectations for the position and set goals for the new hire's first few months. Also discuss how the job is going to look in the first few months and what they should expect in terms of projects and workloads. This meeting is also a good time for the employee to get their first assignment and start diving into projects. After the initial manager meeting, it can be helpful to have quick, daily check ins with the new employee so they can address any problems or questions they are running in to with their first assignments.

## Integrate them into the team

**Making sure your new employee feels comfortable on their new team is key to making sure they feel connected to the organization.** These can be structured or more casual interactions. For example, you can schedule a one-on-one with the new employee and the members of their team or promote casual lunches or coffee breaks. Fostering team integration early on helps the new employee feel comfortable enough to ask questions about things they may be confused on, making them more successful in the role from the beginning. Additionally, it creates a positive work environment, which can be a critical way to measure if your onboarding practices are successful.



# During the **First Few Months**



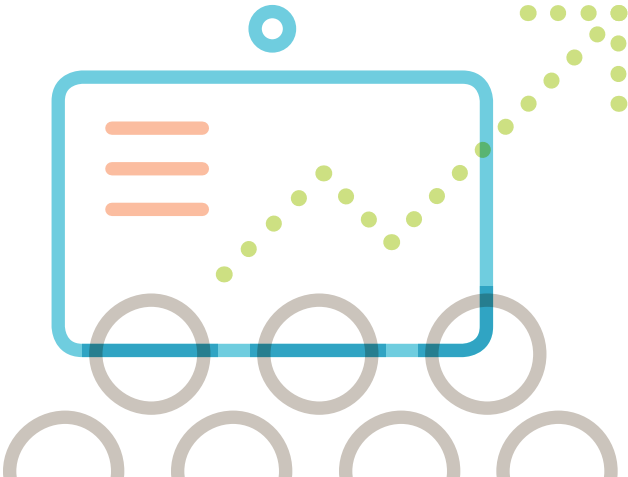
## Build in opportunities for feedback

This should go both ways—make sure the employee is getting substantive feedback on their work early on from their managers while also giving the new employee an opportunity to give their own feedback about their first couple of months on the job. While new hires may not feel comfortable sharing what they like and don't like about the organization or role within the first week, it can be useful to solicit this information after they have been with the agency for a while. You can also offer a feedback opportunity with the option of submitting feedback through an anonymous new hire survey, allowing new employees to get candid with their feedback. **The data you gather will allow you to understand what works and doesn't work in your onboarding practices so you can tweak them to be most effective.**



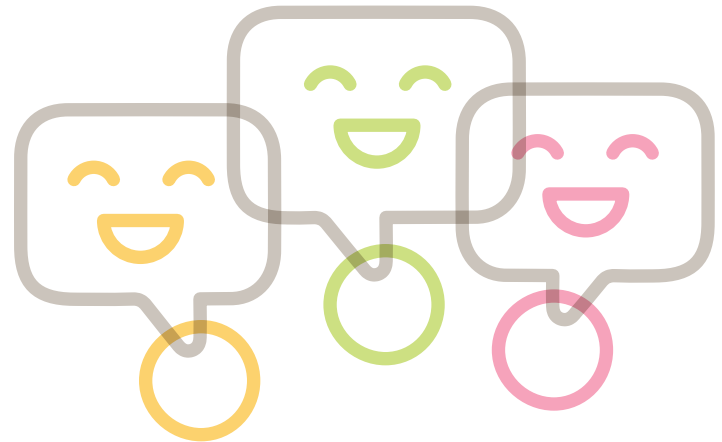
## Put an emphasis on training

Even though a new hire may be able to hit the ground running, it is more beneficial in the long run to view the first few months they are on the job as an initial training period. **Make sure they receive instruction on the ins and outs of the organization and their role within the agency, as well as any technical training they may need.** This might seem like it's taking time away from the new employee working on actual assignments, but once this introductory period is up they will be much stronger and better suited to excel in their role than if you throw them immediately into projects.



## Foster socialization throughout the organization

**No matter the size of your agency, you have access to people who have been in the new employee's shoes before.** Take advantage of this and leverage as much of the organization as possible to get new employees integrated and up to speed. Schedule one-on-one meetings between new hires and veteran employees across departments so they can gain a big picture view of the organization and better understand how their role fits into driving the agency's mission. Additionally, you can use job shadowing when possible so the new employee understands what other people in the organization are doing.





# General Tips

A decorative graphic on page 14 consists of a solid green line that forms a path through three green circles, each containing a white checkmark. The path starts from the top, goes down and left to the first circle, then up and right to the second, and finally down and left to the third. A dotted green line follows a similar path, starting from the left and ending at the top circle. There are also some stray dots on the left side of the page.

## Be consistent and structured

**Have an onboarding plan that you consistently execute with each new employee your organization hires.** Following this checklist is a good start but creating an agency-specific checklist and onboarding checklist can ensure you are consistently following onboarding best practices. Need an example? Check out 18F's automated, [online checklist](#) for new employees to view and track onboarding tasks and the State of Indiana's [hiring manager toolkit](#).



## Engage early and often

**Oftentimes, the most productive employees are the most engaged employees.** As a result, it is critical to ensure that new hires feel that they are engaged from day one. You can do this by getting on the same page about expectations early on, building team trust, celebrating successes of the new team member, and making the new employee feel like they are a part of the team from the beginning. Learn more about how you can drive engagement early [here](#) and [here](#).

## Develop a plan for remote employees

While the public sector has been slower to adopt teleworking than the private sector, many agencies are shifting their mindset and allowing employees to work completely remote. In order to onboard these employees effectively, organizations can still follow the tips outlined in this checklist by leveraging technology. For example, instead of integrating new hires into the team through lunches and coffee, **facilitate interactions with other employees virtually.**

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