

February 2014 New Employee Orientation and Onboarding

It is your first day at a new job and you'll be starting with an all day new employee orientation session. What are you thinking? Most people are not excited about orientation. Why? Often these sessions are predictable, boring, uneventful and passive experiences. No wonder most new employees, if given the choice, would rather skip the day.

Pinellas County has recently done an extensive revamp of both new employee orientation and onboarding. Through a combined team effort orientation has seen significant changes to make it more interactive, engaging and fun. Some of the major changes include:

- A welcome from a senior leader within the organization
- Engaging and interactive small group activities to learn about the County
- Tour of some of the facilities in downtown Clearwater
- More detailed information about key aspects of their new job
- Greater time spent getting to know each other and forming relationships
- Multiple orientation sessions focused on key areas

The new orientation allows employees to begin interacting with one another and sharing who they are. Additionally, it provides key pieces of information to help them get started on the right foot. Orientation is just the beginning.

Onboarding describes how a new employee is welcomed and made to feel a part of the organization. It includes orientation, learning about job duties and new team members, creating a welcoming environment and understanding the culture. In tandem with a revamped orientation is a new and exciting onboarding program. New employees throughout their first year will be receiving:

- Personalized emails and letters
- An initial welcome gift at orientation
- Points that can be saved and redeemed for items

The tagline for our new initiatives is simple, *Welcome aboard!* All of the outreaches to new employees will carry this simple line. We want employees to not only see a comprehensive program, but know we want and welcome their contributions to build the County into a high-performance organization.

The responsibility for onboarding and orientation is everyone's responsibility. While some departments within the County have a more forward facing role, each person can contribute to making a new employee successful. Some things to consider when a new employee arrives:

- Make sure all items are ready for their first day
- Ensure there is someone to show them around and introduce them
- Set check-in dates to see how the employee is progressing

In order to support managers and supervisors in welcoming new employees and onboarding them to their specific job responsibilities we will be developing, in the next phase, an onboarding checklist to make sure key items are accomplished. Look for this item in the coming months.

