

DHS onboarding providing welcoming starts for new employees

In November 2015, DHS [implemented an onboarding program](#) to more effectively integrate new hires into the work environment. Nearly a year later, the program – led by Stacey Tunie, performance improvement analyst in the Office of Administrative and Information Management Services (AIMS) – has grown to become a great success.

More than 250 staff members have attended the biweekly integrated orientation sessions designed to introduce DHS employees, interns, and contracted personnel to the agency's history, vision, and standards of practice. In addition to learning about DHS's structure, the integrated orientation sessions allow new hires to complete Customer Service Fundamentals, HIPPA Privacy and Security, and Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania trainings. Nearly 100 percent of attendees felt that the orientation was an effective way for them to learn this content.

Stacey conducts a voluntary follow-up survey one month after a new employee's start date. The survey assesses all aspects of the onboarding program, including details such as whether the employee's workplace was clean and equipped and if he or she was introduced to peers and supervisors. To date, 35 percent of new employees have participated in the survey, expressing overall satisfaction with the onboarding process. The survey indicates that a majority of employees were greeted by and introduced to key personnel (96.8 percent), feel a part of the team (94.6 percent), and feel welcomed in their new environment (100 percent). A follow-up survey for those who have been here six months or longer is being created.

"These processes, as simple as they may seem, are vital," said Stacey. "We know that employee turnover not only comes at a great financial cost, but can also lead to low morale. In order to most successfully serve Allegheny County's residents, we want to keep qualified people by making them feel welcomed and engaged."

In an effort to share information with staff, "lunch and learn" sessions on current onboarding and offboarding policies will be held in 2017. Further, an onboarding section will soon be added to the DHS intranet, providing around-the-clock access to onboarding information as well as a welcome video from DHS Director Marc Cherna.

"The onboarding team, which includes representatives from all of DHS's offices, has worked hard and we're extremely pleased with how the program has developed over the last year. We look forward to continuously employing innovative methods to best serve the needs of new hires," said Stacey.