



# ONBOARDING GUIDE FOR OHIO EMPLOYERS



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## INTRODUCTION

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Did your company recently add more employees? You spend a significant amount of time and energy recruiting high-quality candidates. As you know, that is only the tip of the iceberg. Once the new employees are on board, you must put as much effort into ensuring they transition smoothly to their new workplace. That includes intangibles, such as helping them feel welcome, and state and federal tax forms, training, company procedures, and professional resources. Lastly, Ohio law requires you to keep all relevant paperwork on file in case of an audit.

This comprehensive guide includes all the necessary information to ensure an organized, painless onboarding process for every new employee.



## EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION (I-9 FORM)

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According to federal law, you must complete an I-9 form for every new employee on or before their first day of employment. The U.S. Citizens and Immigration Services and Department of Homeland Security issues the I-9 Form.

The United States has required employers to complete and submit I-9 forms since it enacted the Immigration Reform and Control Act in 1986. In addition to a legal requirement, the I-9 ensures your company avoids expensive penalties.

The I-9 has two purposes. The first is to verify the identity of a new hire through:

- A copy of their passport

Or

- A combination of their driver's license, social security, or birth certificate

Or

- Other acceptable forms of identification

The second purpose is to ensure each employee is legally authorized to work in the United States. They must fall into one of these categories:

1. United States Citizen
2. Non-United States Citizen National
3. Lawful Permanent Resident
4. Authorized Working Alien

Ohio participates in the E-Verify system, which allows you to verify the eligibility of new employees by checking records available from the U.S. Social Security Administration and Department of Homeland Security. Participation in E-Verify is voluntary for most companies in Ohio. Your company must enroll in E-Verify if you have any federal contracts or subcontracts that contain the Federal Acquisition Regulation Verify clause.



## Federal Income Tax Withholding (W-4 Form)

Another onboarding requirement is the W-4 Form. Every new company employee must complete and submit a W-4 before their first day. The W-4 includes the withholding certificate, worksheets, withholding tables, and instructions. You use your new hire's completed W-4 to calculate how much federal tax to withhold from their paycheck. That amount goes to the federal government.

The W-4, issued by the Internal Revenue Service, was lengthy and complicated. That changed in 2020 when the IRS introduced a revised version. The new W-4 includes only five sections, rather than seven, and is more user-friendly.

Withholding allowances are exemptions employees can claim to reduce the taxes taken from their pay. The more allowances they take, the less you will withhold. The amount you withhold depends on the number of withholding allowances the employee claims and their filing status, such as:

- Single or married
- Married and filing jointly
- Married and filing separately
- Head of household

Encourage your employees to revisit their W-4 forms annually or more frequently if they get married or have another significant life change that affects their taxes.

If the employee claims more allowances than they qualify, their paychecks will be bigger, but they'll have a larger tax bill in April. If they pay the government too much, they'll receive a refund at the end of the year, but they won't have that money throughout the year.

As an employer, give employees information about the W-4 but don't provide tax advice. If an employee doesn't know how many exemptions to claim, refer them to the IRS Tax Withholding Estimator.

Independent contractors, also called 1099 workers, do not have to submit W-4 forms because they usually pay their income tax through personalized quarterly payments to the IRS.





## Ohio State Income Tax Withholding (IT 941)

All Ohio employers must withhold Ohio income tax from employees' pay.

Ohio doesn't require withholding in these situations:

- Agricultural labor
- Domestic service in a private home, local college club, or local chapter of a college fraternity or sorority
- Services employed in a calendar quarter unless the employer pays \$300 or more or your company regularly uses them for the service.
- Services provided for a foreign government or international organization
- Employees under the age of 18 who are delivering newspapers or shopping ads
- Services that aren't part of the employer's trade or business to the extent paid in any medium other than cash.
- Residents of Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, West Virginia, or Pennsylvania who provide services in Ohio.
- The spouse of a military service member if they have residency in the same state and the service member's military records are in another state.

In Ohio, 49 municipalities and 199 school districts also require employees to pay income taxes where they perform their work, even if they split time between home and an office. That applies even if they divide their work hours between two municipalities in one day. If you have an employee who works from home three days a week and two days a week from an office in a different municipality, you must withhold income tax for the appropriate amount of time for each.



## EMPLOYEE FILES

You should maintain a file for each employee in your company. Keeping meticulous employee files will help you:

- Track your employees' performance, growth, and professional development
- Calculate pay raises
- Ensure accurate pay
- Process tax deductions
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Employment and privacy laws require you to keep certain records for a specific length of time. Here are some records you should include, not all of which are required by law:

1. Initial employment documents: Include basic information such as their legal name, social security number, address and telephone number, and an emergency contact. You may wish to include the job description with their position and responsibilities and hiring documents such as a resume or application.
2. Acknowledgment of an employee handbook or rules and regulations: Have each new employee review these documents and sign a form they have read and understood. That could be important in the event of a lawsuit.
3. Tax documents: The federal I-9 and W-4 forms and the Ohio IT 941
4. Medical files: Health insurance forms, beneficiary forms, family and medical leave act paperwork, and workers compensation claims
5. Separation or termination information: Include the date and reason



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## EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Proper training for new employees helps them understand your company's structure, learn how to follow procedures and acclimate them to the culture. Thorough training for each new employee also demonstrates that you value their contributions, enables them to succeed in their new position, and encourages them to take ownership of their work and performance.

Here's what to include:

### **Benefits Training**

Your company's benefits package--including health insurance, paid time off, and retirement-- is probably a significant perk for employees, and as such, you should provide them with comprehensive information. Some employees get overwhelmed by or struggle to understand complicated insurance offerings. This is why it is so crucial that you provide detailed benefits training.

### **Ethics and Culture**

New employees can't understand company culture or how to respond in certain situations without proper ethics training. Ethics training gives new hires the tools to address ethical dilemmas and helps create a culture of integrity, transparency, and responsibility. Here are topics you may want to include:

- Laws and regulations that govern your company's industry
- Mission and vision statements
- A code of conduct
- Reporting procedures

In addition, Ohio has specific protocols for misconduct in the workplace.

### **Department-specific training**

Within your company, each department has its own rules and required training. As part of department-specific training, introduce new employees to department managers who can review expectations. Depending on the department's function, a new employee might also have to learn to use new technology or other tools. For technology, be sure to include department-specific and company-wide policies for acceptable use. Each department should provide written documents for future reference.

### **Harassment training**

Ohio doesn't legally require sexual harassment training in the workplace, but the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission strongly recommends it to create a safe and welcoming workplace for every worker.



## EMPLOYEE TRAINING

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### Mentorship Programs

Mentorship programs are an excellent onboarding and retention tool because they help support employees from the beginning. A mentor is an experienced, high-functioning staff member who partners with a new employee to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. They provide invaluable guidance and are especially beneficial for underrepresented groups. Mentorship programs also help new hires adjust to company culture and increase job satisfaction. Tell your new employees how long the program is, how you chose their mentor, and how they can expect to hear from them.

Mentor responsibilities include:

- Give constructive feedback
- Provide opportunities to practice new skills to enhance performance
- Answer questions and set expectations
- Encourage calculated risks



## Human Resources Best Practices

As a human resource professional, you wear many hats and juggle many responsibilities. Hiring, onboarding, and retention are among your most important tasks. Here are some best practices to help you provide an exceptional new employee experience.

### **Best Practice #1: Foster a strong company culture**

A robust company culture drives employee satisfaction, helps employees feel valued, and fosters a sense of belonging. The result is increased productivity and improved retention. Team building, a cornerstone of a strong company culture, increases creativity, strengthens communication, and fosters problem-solving.

### **Best Practice #2: Provide growth opportunities**

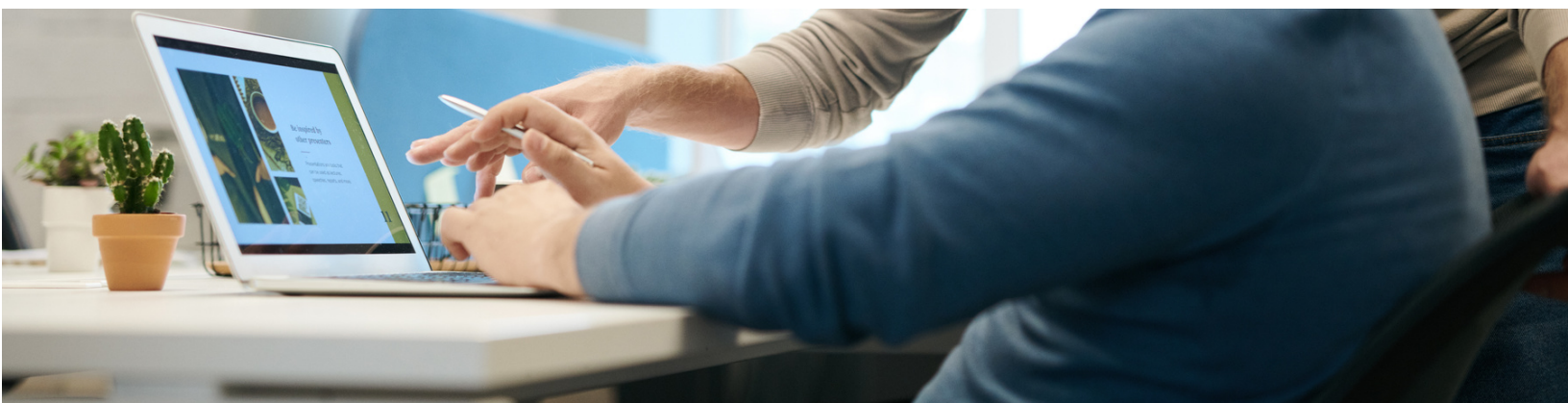
A learning culture rewards your employees for professional growth and demonstrates that you value their contributions to your company. Give employees ownership of their career paths. Work with them to develop their futures and realize their goals. Consider educational stipends for professional certifications and new skill training.

### **Best Practice #3: Communicate and check in often**

Frequent and open communication is an essential HR best practice, primarily when so many employees work from home at least part of the time. Regular check-ins with managers are a chance to discuss concerns, ask questions, and celebrate successes. Consider allowing employees to speak directly to company leadership, possibly through an open forum.

### **Best Practice #4: Build an all-star team**

Even the most successful companies won't survive without the right people. Incorporate a robust recruiting process by developing detailed job descriptions, mining passive talent pools, and encouraging referrals. Stay in touch with and track potential candidates through the recruitment and interview process.





**Best Practice #5: Be flexible**

Be open-minded about flexible work opportunities for existing and potential employees. That includes when and from where they work. Consider incorporating flex time, job sharing, or hiring part-time employees.

**Best Practice #6: Have a smooth, robust onboarding process**

Onboarding is crucial for employee retention. It boosts engagement and creates a supportive environment for new hires. The process should begin before a new team member starts their job and continues through the first year. Consider incorporating some fun, creative activities instead of boring onboarding videos. That can be especially important if your company is virtual.





# HOW ASAP PAYROLL CAN HELP

Are you looking for professionals specialized in payroll, time and attendance, and human capital management? At ASAP Payroll, we offer customized solutions to help your business navigate these issues. Reach out to us for a free quote and subscribe to our newsletter for tips on maximizing your productivity and ROI.

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