

# The First 90 Days - An FAQ Guide for employers

This FAQ page, created by the Neighbors United Employment Committee, outlines how intentional onboarding, structured training and clear communication can improve employee retention and productivity. It emphasizes practical strategies such as using translation tools, setting clear expectations, and providing ongoing feedback and support.

*Please note that this document is intended as a general guide and does not serve as legal or professional advice. For specific guidance related to HR policies, legal compliance, labor laws, or other regulatory matters, employers should consult with HR departments, legal authorities, or relevant professionals to ensure full adherence to applicable laws and regulations.*

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### Section #1 - Onboarding and Training

1. What happens when employers invest in onboarding and training for new employees?
  - a. Early investment in onboarding builds a strong foundation for success
  - b. Effective onboarding improves retention, productivity, and engagement, which results in long-term cost savings
  - c. Structured training helps the employer identify skill gaps, provide feedback and offer targeted support
  - d. Clear onboarding helps new hires understand workplace expectations, culture and norms
  
2. What are best practices for training and onboarding new hires?
  - a. Provide clear expectations and structure

- i. Confirm first-day details such as start time and end time location, required documents, expected dress code, and agenda (as applicable)
    - ii. Outline responsibilities, performance standards and timelines for each onboarding stage
    - iii. Use step-by-step, role-specific checklists to help new hires stay organized and track progress
  - b. Translate important training materials and utilize visuals or infographics to support employees with limited English
  - c. Clearly communicate what successful performance looks like and how it will be measured
  - d. Consider scheduling regular feedback opportunities at (15 days, 30 days, 60 days, and 90 days)
  - e. Encourage trainings that help new employees build an understanding of overall workflow
  - f. Take time to explain workplace systems, such as pay stubs, tax deductions, and the benefits of enrollment, to ensure understanding and confidence. Be prepared to teach vocabulary related to taxes and benefits. See section #3
  - g. Re-evaluate the onboarding/training process regularly. Gather feedback from recent hires about what training was most useful and where improvements are needed

## Section #2 - Effective Communication

1. How can employers support an employee who has limited English?
  - a. Encourage supervisors and their staff to use translation tools such as Google Translate or Tarjimly (See Resource Section)
  - b. Allow time for managers to learn how to use translation tools effectively
  - c. Consider designating a multi-lingual employee on shift as “language lead” who can interpret for others and receive a small pay incentive to do so
  - d. Translate essential materials such as safety guidelines, policies, and benefits information
  - e. Consider offering text-to-audio translations for employees with emerging English literacy skills
2. How can employers make sure a new employee understands expectations and feels like part of the team?
  - a. Provide clear onboarding and job training (see section #1 for more details)

- b. Check for understanding and offer retraining as needed.
    - i. Tell me what you are going to do.
    - ii. Show me what you are going to do next.
    - iii. Tell me who to talk to if you have a question?
  - c. Foster belonging and trust through team activities that bridge language and cultural differences
  - d. Invite new employees to join team lunch and breaks
  - e. Discuss workplace norms openly (e.g., attendance, dress code)
  - f. Be patient and kind when questions arise. Confirm understanding by asking follow-up questions or rephrasing explanations
3. What are tips for clear communication?
- a. Clarify which communication methods to use for different purposes (e.g. meetings, emails, chat, phone calls, text messages)
  - b. Use plain language and avoid slang, idioms or technical jargon
  - c. Give instructions in short, clear steps and confirm comprehension
  - d. Supplement spoken directions with visual aids or written summaries
4. How should employers consider language and culture when communicating? What about non-verbal communication differences?
- a. Understand that comfort levels in communicating with supervisors varies by cultures
    - i. Some employees may feel uneasy posing questions to an authority figure
    - ii. Create space for dialogue by checking in and regularly inviting questions in private or group settings
  - b. Recognize that communication styles vary across cultures:
    - i. Silence can indicate thoughtfulness, not confusion
    - ii. Limited eye contact may show respect, not disengagement
    - iii. Indirect communication may be used to show politeness

## Section #3 - Belonging and Understanding Company Processes

1. Why is belonging important?
  - a. Employees who feel a sense of belonging at their company are more productive, innovative, and committed to the organization
  - b. [Research from the McKinsey Health Institute and World Economic Forum](#) shows that investing in employee wellbeing could boost the economy by **\$11.7 trillion**.
  - c. Employers can improve an employee's sense of belonging by fostering a healthy work environment and clearly explaining benefits, policies, and expectations

2. What defines a healthy and supportive workplace?
  - a. Trust: Be transparent and keep commitments
  - b. Respect: Include all team members and communicate openly
  - c. Recognition: Celebrate milestones and show appreciation frequently
  - d. Feedback: Ask for input regularly and provide constructive feedback privately
  - e. Growth: Support learning and career development conversations
  - f. Teamwork: Resolve conflicts promptly and encourage respectful discussion
3. How can employers help their employees feel supported and welcome?
  - a. Share stories of team or company achievements
  - b. Celebrate onboarding milestones
  - c. Hold regular check-ins for feedback and questions
  - d. Set up the employee's workspace before arrival
  - e. Explain company communication norms and practices
  - f. Help new hires understand the organization's structure and values
  - g. Consider supporting new hires through mentorships
    - i. Pair new employees with a mentor or peer supporter who can answer questions and model workplace expectations
4. What are common mistakes to avoid?
  - a. Don't penalize mistakes; treat them as learning opportunities
  - b. Avoid assigning tasks before providing proper instruction; confirm understanding by having the employee demonstrate the task
  - c. Do not ignore cultural or communication difference
  - d. Do not assume belonging "just happens" without intentional support and structure
  - e. Avoid relying solely on yes/no questions to check understanding. Instead, use who, what, where, when, and how
  - f. Don't assume that employees have the same holiday traditions or expected time off. Recognize cultural observances and consider offering flexible/floating holidays
5. How can employers explain benefits and policies?
  - a. Provide written summaries with plain definitions for terms like "deductible" or "401(k)". If possible, offer translated versions
  - b. Consider having a 1:1 session between the new employee and supervisor (or assigned mentor or language-lead) to go over processes such as reading/accessing pay stubs, requesting time off, informing supervisor of illness, and other company processes. Employers have

seen success in offering this type of 1:1 session more than once to a new employee during their first 90 days

- c. Offer an HR information session during which employees can ask questions relating to worker rights and responsibilities, company policies and benefits
  - i. Use visuals, infographics, or step-by-step guides to clarify complex benefits and policy information
  - ii. Give practical examples showing how policies apply in real workplace scenarios
- d. Reinforce key benefits and policies during team meetings or onboarding milestones
- e. Track common questions or misunderstandings to improve future onboarding materials

## Section #4 - Resources

### Resource Guides and Tool Kits

[Idaho Resource Guide - Idaho Office for Refugees](#)

[US Employers' Guide to Hiring Refugees](#)

[Bridging Language and Work: Solutions to Invest in Immigrant and Refugee Talent](#)

[Colorado Office of New Americans Resources and Tool-Kits for Hiring New Americans](#)

[Group Mentoring for Immigrant and Refugee Professionals](#)

[Steps to Success: Integrating Immigrant Professionals in the US](#)

[Behind Every Employer - Resources](#)

### State and National Organizations

<https://www.shrm.org/>

[Idaho Office for Refugees](#)

[Global Talent](#)

[Agency for New Americans - Home](#)

[International Rescue Committee](#)

[Neighbors United](#)

[One Refugee](#)

[Idaho Department of Labor](#)

[Idaho Launch](#)

[Economic Opportunity](#)

[Glocal Community Partners](#)

[TANTA, Inc.](#)

[Learning Lab](#)

[English Language Center](#)

[College of Western Idaho](#)

## **Mentorships**

[Tent's mentorship initiative](#) (pairs employees from leading companies with refugee mentees)

## **Digital English Instruction and Upskilling**

[EnGen](#) - personalized learning solutions for adults with limited English

[Tarjimly.org](#) – interpretation service



**NeighborsUnited**

Refugee Collaborative of Boise