



New Employee Orientation Program

Guide

Employee Development Section
REE Services Branch
Human Resources Division
Administrative and Financial Management



**ARS New Employee Orientation Program
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OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the *ARS New Employee Orientation Program* are:

- **to have an effective orientation program that is consistent throughout ARS**
- **to have an agency orientation program supporting the ARS human resource mission of establishing and maintaining an effective, diverse, and motivated workforce to ensure research excellence in support of the Agency mission.**

A successful orientation is well planned. Orientation is spread over a period of time and is an ongoing process, not just a 1-day event. Information should be given to the new employee closest to the time it is needed.

The enclosed outline is intended to help you plan for an orientation program where none exists now or to refine your current orientation. Systematically review this outline, and use it as a **guide** for what new employees need to know. *You can customize the program to accommodate the unique characteristics of your office.* Enclosed are **suggested steps** to take by those who will be presenting the new employee orientation. A time line has been included to help plan and implement your orientation program.

Part I

First Day

Welcome

It is suggested that the Area Director, Division Director, Location Coordinator, Research Leader, etc. welcome new employees. An overview of the ARS mission and vision should be presented.

Video

“*Science In Your Shopping Cart*” will provide new employees with information on some of the research that is done by the Agricultural Research Service, and an understanding of the importance of their position to the agency.

Processing-In

The processing-in personnel will go over the forms listed on the “*Processing-In Checklist*” and answer any questions.

To give the new employee a break from completing the forms, you could stop and discuss other topics such as: annual and sick leave, LWOP, etc. You could then go back to reviewing the last of the forms on the list.

Video: The Office of Personnel Management has two videos on benefits: 1) “*Benefits...Get Serious*” and 2) “*Let’s Talk Benefits - An Introduction to Federal Benefits and the Decisions You Need to Make as New Employee*”. Both videos can be ordered from:

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, N.W., RIS/BORC Room 4351
Washington, DC 20415-3300
Email - benefits@opm.gov (or fax to 202-606-1108)

The cost: “*Benefits Get Serious*” - \$25 and “*Let’s Talk Benefits*” - \$39.

REMINDER: Please be sure new employees are provided a copy of “*Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch*” when they are processed-in.

After the forms have been reviewed, the new employee should sign and date the “*Processing-In Checklist*.” A copy should then be forwarded to the servicing branch of the Human Resources Division where a copy will be filed in the employee’s Official Personnel Folder.

Meet with Supervisor

The enclosed “Supervisor’s Checklist” is a *suggested* checklist for supervisor’s use. This is an opportunity for the supervisor to explain policies to the new employee. The supervisor may not need to cover all items on the checklist—depends on the employee’s position. Additional information on many of the topics will be discussed in Part II.

The supervisor should **“x” the items discussed with the new employee.** The employee and supervisor should sign and date the “*Supervisor’s Checklist.*” The supervisor should file the checklist in the supervisor’s work file. A copy of the Supervisor’s Checklist may be given to the Location Administrative Officer or employee conducting Part II of the agency orientation to cover topics in more detail.

PART I - First Day

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Approx. Time</u>
Welcome Mission Vision	AD/LC/RL/DD	10-15 minutes
Video--<i>Science in Your Shopping Cart</i>	Processing-In Personnel	15 minutes
Processing-In Forms Benefits review	Processing-In Personnel	2 hours
Meet with Supervisor		2 hours

Processing-In Checklist

Employee's Name: _____

Title/Series/Grade: _____

EOD: _____

Type of Appointment:

- _____ Career Conditional
- _____ Career
- _____ Temporary
- _____ Term
- _____ Excepted Service

Benefits for Which Appointee Is Eligible: _____ FEHB _____ CSRS (offset) _____ FICA _____ FEGLI
_____ CSRS _____ FERS _____ TSP _____ Leave Earning

- _____ Selective Service Statement (required for all males born after 12/31/59)
- _____ *I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification
- _____ *SF-61 Appointment Affidavit
- _____ *OF-306 306 Declaration for Federal Employment (return original signed by employee in 6a & 16b)
- _____ *SF-1199A Direct Deposit Sign-Up Form
- _____ *FMS-2231 Faststart Direct Deposit
- _____ *SF-181 Race & National Origin Identification
- _____ *SF-256 Self-Identification of Handicap
- _____ *AD-349 Employee Address
- _____ *W-4 Federal Tax Withholding
- _____ State Tax Withholding (if required)
- _____ SF-85 Data for Nonsensitive Positions
- _____ SF-87 Fingerprint Charts
- _____ *OPM-1635 Welfare to Work Program (Voluntary)

***All employees must receive these forms.
Other forms are based on employee's appointment.**

Cover the following topics and/or show orientation video

- Annual, Sick, LWOP
- Family Medical Leave
- Leave Transfer Program
- Federal Holidays
- Health Benefits
- Life Insurance
- Retirement Benefits
- Thrift Savings Program
- Public Transportation Benefit Program

Continue covering forms below

- _____ SF-2809A Federal Employees Health Benefits Program Book
- _____ SF-2809 Health Benefits Registration Form
- _____ Health Plan Comparison Chart
- _____ SF-2817A FEGLI Book
- _____ SF-2817 Life Insurance Election Form
- _____ Thrift Savings Plan Book and Brochure
- _____ Temporary Appointment Statement (use applicable statement)
- _____ Temporary L/A
- _____ SF-2823 Designation of Beneficiary (FEGLI)
- _____ *SF-1152 Designation of Beneficiary (Unpaid Compensation)
- _____ SF-3102 Designation of Beneficiary (FERS)
- _____ SF-2808 Designation of Beneficiary (CSRS)
- _____ TSP-3 Designation of Beneficiary (THRIFT) (form is mailed directly to TSP)
- _____ RI90-1 FERS-Federal Employees Retirement System (An Overview of Your Benefits)
- _____ *Standards of Ethical Conduct
- _____ *Responsibilities and Conduct
- _____ The USDA Handbook on Workplace Violence Prevention and Response
- _____ *Identification Card
- _____ Agreement, Student Career Experience Program
- _____ Statement of Understanding, Student Temporary Employment Program

***All employees must receive these forms.
Other forms are based on employee's appointment.**

I have been provided all the forms indicated above.

Employee Signature

Date

Supervisor's Checklist

Pre-Enter On Duty Checklist

- Prepare employee's office (provide office supplies, chair, computer, etc.)
- Have any required keys (i.e., restroom or office keys)
- Schedule meeting with appropriate personnel (i.e., Location Coordinator, Area Director, Division Director)
- Schedule appointment with computer personnel to provide an overview of automation tools
- Send e-mail to all staff introducing new employee
- Schedule appointment with yourself to spend time with the new employee to discuss items on checklist
- Assign a "buddy"/co-worker (a co-worker to give personal assistance to the new employee i.e., assist in training new employee, be a tour guide, be a lunch companion, help clarify assignments, be an information source on policies, procedures, and work rules)

Enter On Duty

General Information

- Work area/office
- Office support
- Mail
- Telephone procedures
- Parking
- Security procedures (keys, before/after hours, etc.)
- Work hours
- Personal calls/visitors
- Smoking policy
- Restroom facilities
- Cafeteria/break facilities
- Safeguarding personal belongings
- Building tour (offices, mailroom, nurse station, credit union, etc.)
- Wellness programs (EAP)
- Employee organizations
- Fitness centers
- Child care
- Other _____

Administrative

- Headquarters/Area/Location organizational charts
- Headquarters/Area/Location functional statements
- Headquarters/ Area/Location strategic objectives
- Telephone directories/listings
- REE/ARS policy on leave, alternate work schedules
- Office policies
- Time and attendance procedures
- Travel credit card
- Purchase credit card
- Government telephone card

Information Technology

- Username and password
- Voice mail
- Internet address and access
- Computer security
- E-mail
- Electronic recordkeeping

My Position

- Job description
- Performance standards
- Safety training
- Individual development plan
- SMART Center
- List of position-specific regulations/guidance or websites (e.g., REE directives, NFC manuals, etc.)
- Probationary periods (new employee and supervisory)

Miscellaneous

- Use of government vehicles
- Conference rooms
- Other _____

Employee's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Part II

4 - 6 Weeks Later

Four to six weeks after a new employee begins working, an **Agency Overview** is suggested.

Headquarters/Areas/Locations/Offices will designate who will conduct Part II of the orientation. The Employee Development Section of the Human Resources Division has provided a handout on the organizational structure of USDA and ARS. The designated person should cover the “administrative” topics listed and add any topics specific to their Area/Location/Office.

Supervisors may cover some of the same topics as you see on the Part II list, but Headquarters/ Areas/Locations/Offices may want to cover many of the topics in more detail.

The designated person can determine the length of time for this part of the orientation.

PART II

4 to 6 Weeks Later (½ day)

Agency Overview

Structure
Values
Strategic Plans

Headquarter/Area Offices

Administrator's Office
National Program Staff
Administrative and Financial Management
Information Staff
Civil Rights/EEO
Office of Technology Transfer
Legislative Affairs Office
Budget and Program Management
Office of Chief Information Officer
Office of International Research Programs
Office of Scientific Quality Review
ARS Area Offices/Locations
National Agricultural Library

Other Topics

Time and attendance policies
Travel policies (including foreign)
Ethical standards
Safety (office and lab)
Office of Worker's Compensation Program (OWCP)
Career development (IDP, etc.)
Websites
Headquarters/Area/Location tour
Retirement
Unions
Policies and procedures
Employee Assistance Program
Cooperative Resolution Program
Mandatory training (workplace violence, sexual harassment, ethics, diversity, etc.)
Other (Headquarters/Area/Location specific)

Part III

4 - 6 Months Later

It is suggested that 4-6 months after an employee has become familiar with their new job and the agency, that the Headquarters/Area/Location/Office hold brown bag lunches and/or roundtable discussions to discuss topics of interest to the new employees. Topics identified could be of interest to all and an invitation could be extended to all employees.

Headquarters/Area/Location/Offices are encouraged to conduct an orientation for specific occupations as well, for example, students, temporary, office support, etc.

Suggestions –

Brown bag lunches and/or roundtable discussions

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)

Retirement

Career Development

EAP (maybe a representative could come in and talk about their services)

“How Goes It” or Adjusting to the ARS Organization

Tools for Technicians

Modules for specific occupations

Scientist-RPES

Office support

Part-time employees

Students

Others

PART IV

Evaluation of ARS New Employee Orientation Program

The Human Resources Division would appreciate each new employee and their supervisor completing the enclosed evaluation forms. Your responses will help the Human Resources Division evaluate the:

- 1) effectiveness and achievement of orientation objectives;
- 2) timing and completeness of information in the program; and,
- 3) information offered to the new employee.

The enclosed “Post-Orientation Evaluation by New Employee” and “Post-Orientation Evaluation by Supervisor” should be **completed 4 weeks after the new employee begins work**. Completed forms should be mailed to:

USDA, ARS
Human Resources Division
Employee Development Section
5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Room 3-1134D
Beltsville, Maryland 20705

EVALUATION
NEW EMPLOYEE

It has been 4 weeks since you attended your initial orientation. A great deal of information was offered and presented concerning ARS policies, procedures, and benefits. Your perspective on the information you were given is important. Please answer these questions to help complete Part I and Part II of your orientation and to assist us in improving our orientation program.

Use the rating scale below to indicate your opinion of how well the new-employee process accomplished the following objectives. Rate the following parts of the program according to this scale:

- 5 = very definitely/very clear
- 4 = yes/mostly clear
- 3 = somewhat/OK
- 2 = not sure/need more information
- 1 = no/insufficient

How I Feel Now:

- _____ 1. I am eager to begin work.
- _____ 2. I feel welcome here.
- _____ 3. I anticipate a positive working relationship with my supervisor.
- _____ 4. I anticipate a positive working relationship with peers in my department.

Orientation objectives:

- _____ 5. I received essential information.
- _____ 6. I received information in a timely manner.
- _____ 7. I know what is expected of me by my supervisor.
- _____ 8. I know what is expected of me by my coworkers.
- _____ 9. I understand my job responsibilities.
- _____ 10. I have essential supplies and equipment to do my job or know where to find them.

- 11. What were the most helpful items covered during orientation?

- 12. What items were not helpful, not needed, or could have waited until later to be addressed?

- 13. What items were not covered during the initial meetings that you want to know about?

- 14. What questions do you have about information presented that did not occur to you at the time?

Overall rating of the orientation program's value to me: _____

EVALUATION
SUPERVISOR and/or LOCATION/OFFICE REPRESENTATIVE

It has been 4 weeks since your new employee (name) _____ attended Part I and Part II of the orientation program. A great deal of information was offered and presented concerning our policies, procedures, and benefits. Your perspective on the information that was given is important. Please answer these questions to help complete Part I and Part II of your new employee orientation and to assist us in improving the orientation program.

Use the rating scale below to indicate your opinion of how well the new-employee process accomplished the following objectives. Rate the following parts of the program according to this scale:

- 5 = very definitely/very clear
- 4 = yes/mostly clear
- 3 = somewhat/OK
- 2 = not sure/need more information
- 1 = no/insufficient

- _____ 1. The new employee received essential information.
- _____ 2. The new employee received information in a timely manner.
- _____ 3. The new employee was informed about his or her supervisor's expectations.
- _____ 4. The new employee was informed about the expectations that his or her coworkers have of him or her.
- _____ 5. The new employee's job responsibilities were explained to him or her.
- _____ 6. The new employee has essential supplies and equipment to do his or her job or has been told where to find them.

- 7. What information has the employee asked about that could have been included in the initial meeting?

- 8. What items at the orientation were not helpful, not needed, or could have waited until later to be addressed?

- 9. What further information does the employee need now?

- 10. What skill training does the employee need now?