



*New County Extension Directors Fact Sheet*  
*Assisting New Employees*

**Introduction**

Most people remember their first days on the job, whether they were well-planned and welcoming, or scatter-shot and unorganized. The first 8-16 hours on a job can have a lasting influence on the new staff member for the rest of their career with the organization.

The goal is to make the new employee feel welcome, to provide the basic tools and knowledge that the person needs to start working, and to start him/her on a development path that leads to success. An important function is to quickly show new hires where they fit in, and to give them a sense of belonging. Remembering how important first days are - it is important to make sure that they are not left to chance.

**First Impressions**

You have an opportunity to make a positive first impression and provide support for a new employee during the period between the day they are hired and the day they report for work. This is when your new employee is breaking old attachments and looking for new ones. Some employees may be relocating to your community. By anticipating the anxieties of this transition period, your office may take steps to make the change smoother and more comfortable, and your actions can also emphasize our commitment to incorporating the new staff member as a valued employee.

County directors are responsible for the completion of the required paperwork at the local level. This paperwork and proof of identification can be completed if the new employee has an opportunity to visit the office prior to their first day of employment. This will allow the new employee to be entered into the WSU personnel system. This will alleviate employee stress around receiving their first pay check. An email account can be assigned, business cards can be ordered, and new equipment can be ordered. The WSU Extension Professional Development Web site has a checklist to use with new employees.

Access the WSU Extension Professional Development Web site for the new employee. This Web site contains a welcome from the Dean and Director as well as information the new employee can use to assist in their orientation.

The Web site includes a checklist of items for you, as the first line supervisor, to discuss with the new employee. There is a corresponding checklist of activities for the new employee to assist in the orientation process.

### **Ideas to Consider**

- A note of welcome, a call from a co-worker, a letter detailing start times and the first day's schedule will help shift attention from the place they are leaving and focus on connections to the new job.
- Plan the first day of the new employee in advance; organize their work area; consider allowing time for a break or take lunch together.
- Notify Human Resources of the new employee's start date allowing timely mailing of benefits materials. Review new employee orientation information and new employee checklist to assist you with organizing useful information.

### **First Day on the Job**

First days may be difficult for the new hire as well as for the supervisor and co-workers. The seemingly inordinate amount of time required to supervise new-comers can be frustrating; and, new employees may feel overwhelmed with all the new information regarding the organization, their job duties and responsibilities that they receive as they begin. However, new employees are eager to learn and to understand how their roles contribute to the total picture.

### **Ideas to Consider**

- Be available to greet the new employee as they arrive. Introduce them to co-workers and show them their work space. If you are unavailable, identify in advance the individual responsible for orientating the new employee on this first day.
- Organize the day to allow time to work with the new employee, time for reading information and completing remaining paperwork independently, and additional time to assist in reviewing information and answering questions.
- Assist the new employee with first-day information located in the New Employee Checklist. At the end of the day, allow time for additional questions and an overview of the day ahead.

### **Assimilation of New Employees**

Those with the most to gain (or lose) from successful early experiences are the new employee and his/her supervisor. Place an emphasis on tying the WSU Extension mission, service to clientele, and the new employee's individual contributions to these to help get him/her on board quickly. Eliminate misimpressions about the organization or their role, to help make him/her productive, committed, and energized. New employees may hit an all-time low in self-esteem and self-assurance during their first few months on the job as they recognize the need to learn new methods, and experience uncertainty about their abilities. Assurance, encouragement, and recognition for accomplishments will help to insure a successful relationship.

### **Ideas to Consider**

- Orient the new employee to the overall job and the organization (rather than just focusing on their individual job duties).

- Continue to support progress through the New Employee Checklist timeline.
- Encourage participation in statewide New Employee Orientation.
- Schedule time (weekly at first, then monthly) to review progress, and to answer questions and concerns. Find time to recognize successes.
- Work with the employee and the EEO Coordinator to schedule a campus visit for new faculty within their first 30 days of employment. They can complete benefits paperwork, visit Extension administration and support personnel, meet Business and Finance Office (BFO) personnel, and meet with faculty in their related departments.

*Adapted from Ohio State University Extension, Orientation for New County Extension Directors, Guide Sheet #8*