

The background image shows two women in professional attire. The woman on the left is Black with short curly hair, wearing a dark blazer over a light top, and is smiling. The woman on the right is White with curly hair, wearing a light-colored blazer over a dark top, and is also smiling while shaking hands with a man whose arm and hand are visible on the right side of the frame. The setting appears to be an office with a bookshelf and a lamp in the background.

**U.S. ARMY CIVILIAN
ONBOARDING &
ACCULTURATION
PROGRAM**

**Sponsor's Guide
to Onboarding
and Acculturation**



INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on being selected to sponsor a new Army Civilian in the Army Civilian Corps!

Remember your first days as a new Army Civilian? Those initial experiences went a long way in determining how quickly you became an effective, fully contributing member of the workforce.

Now it's your turn to help ensure that the new Army Civilian's first days on the job are a positive experience. You have been selected as a sponsor because you exemplify the Army's and your organization's values and mission, you are familiar with formal/informal organizational structures and culture, and have excellent communications and interpersonal skills.

This guide has been created to help you be effective and successful in your role as sponsor, and to explain the Army Onboarding and Acculturation program and your responsibilities. It also includes tips and tools that you can use to: (1) ensure new employees successfully transition into the organization and (2) help new employees get excited and believe:

"Wow! I made the right decision to work for the Army, this is going to be a great place to work!"

Ideally, sponsors will:

- Help new employees feel welcome and reduce anxiety.
- Project a positive perception of the Army and the employee's new team.
- Help create a bond between the new employee and the organization.
- Help new employees understand the structure, culture, values, policies, procedures, and practices of the Army.
- Support new employees during their onboarding experience.

You can make a significant difference in how quickly the new employee becomes productive while directly affecting employee engagement and retention. Using the resources from the Army's Civilian Onboarding and Acculturation Program will make your job easier as you welcome new employees into your daily operations. If you have any questions regarding your role as a sponsor for new employee onboarding and acculturation, please contact your supervisor, or your organization's Civilian Human Resources, or G-1 office.

Before we get started, let's review a few aspects of the program.

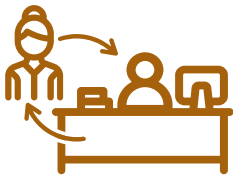
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Orientation is transactional in nature

- Typically a one-time event
- Focuses on organizational structure, mission, and policies
- Completion of payroll and benefits paperwork
- Other administrative issues



Onboarding is strategic in nature

- Lasts for months
- Promotes better understanding of Army culture, mission, and goals
- Fosters a feeling of belonging and affirmation of making a right choice
- Maximizes engagement and retention

Effective Onboarding helps:

- Attract/retain top talent
- Build trust
- Promote commitment to the organization
- Encourage manager/employee communication
- Foster an environment of employee engagement

ONBOARDING

What is Onboarding?

A successful onboarding program makes a positive impression on a new employee and creates a welcoming feeling that confirms their decision to work for the Army. An effective onboarding program starts when the job offer is extended and continues through the first year of employment. Onboarding consists of a series of activities, including new employee orientation. Orientation generally involves a first-day session at the local Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) where new employees review and complete necessary payroll and benefits paperwork, and familiarize themselves with the organization's structure, mission, and policies. If you have any questions regarding new employee orientation, please contact your organization's Civilian Human Resources Office, G-1 Office, or local CPAC.

Onboarding is the process of integrating and acculturating new employees to the Army and their unit, helping them to understand job expectations and how their position aligns with their organization's mission, and quickly equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and key relationships to become productive members of the Army Profession. Acculturation is a socialization process that supports new employees by helping them learn, adjust to, internalize, and ultimately embody the organizational culture.

Why is Onboarding Important?

Making a good impression is paramount! Employees arrive at their new jobs excited and engaged. Your job, as their sponsor, is to channel that energy toward success by helping them feel welcome and become fully integrated into the organization. A carefully planned and well-executed onboarding process will help you do that.

Effective employee onboarding serves three interrelated purposes:

1. Ensures that the employees feel welcome, comfortable, prepared, and supported; which
2. Increase the new employees' ability to make an impact and be productive within their role, both immediately and over time; which
3. Leads to satisfaction and retention, allowing the Army to achieve its goals and continue to meet its mission.

While onboarding is a yearlong process, the first 30 days are critical. During those days, your role as sponsor is very important.



WHAT IS A SPONSOR?

A sponsor is someone who partners with a new employee to offer advice and guidance that help foster and promote the skill and professional development of a new employee.

As a sponsor, you have been identified by your supervisor or organization as a superior performer with strong people skills. You know the ropes and, more importantly, you know what actions to take to be successful in achieving the mission. You're a source of advice and encouragement who can succeed in steering new employees in the right direction and help create and maintain a positive and productive culture of excellence.

You are someone the new employee can trust. Part of your role is to create a comfortable, less formal environment in which the employee can ask and receive information about the Army's values, culture, and norms, including those everyday procedures and policies, written and unwritten, that help to explain how things really work.

Finally, a major goal for you as a sponsor is to establish a sense of belonging. With an effective sponsor, each new employee will quickly become a contributing member of their new organization.



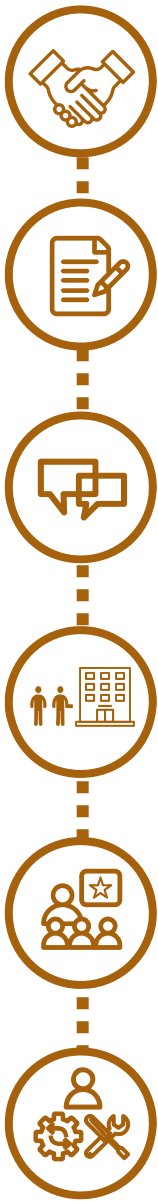
The sponsor should help establish a sense of belonging for the new employee.

Role of the Sponsor

As mentioned above, your role is to help new employees understand how they fit in the organization, what is expected of them and the best practices to ensure that they will succeed.

An important point to remember is that your role is not meant to be a substitute for the employee's supervisor. While you may be able to help the employee work through discussions they would like to have with their supervisor, it is not your job to have those discussions with their supervisor yourself. Topics such as conditions of employment, work assignments, performance, time and attendance, leave, career opportunities, training, conduct, etc., must be discussed between the employee and their supervisor. If you get specific questions about these areas, please direct the employee to their supervisor.

Listed below are sponsor responsibilities and tips, as well as some possible new employee expectations. Discuss your plans to accomplish these responsibilities with the new employee's supervisor to ensure the two of you are not duplicating any actions and to get ideas on what will work best in your local environment.



Sponsor Responsibilities

1. **Meet and greet:** When possible, meet the new employee on their first day and go to lunch together. If this is not possible, ensure that you are able to meet for lunch in their first few days.
2. **Provide information:** Be an informational resource for the new employee on policies, procedures, work rules, norms, etc.
 - Provide your contact information so they can reach out to you with any questions.
 - Set up regular meetings or lunches to continue the discussions.
3. **Offer insight and feedback:** Provide insight, feedback, and information that support the new employee's social involvement in the organization.
4. **Be a "tour guide:"** Give a tour of the facility where the employee will be working and make introductions.
 - Show them where equipment is and how to use it—copiers, printers, etc.
 - Show them the location of the restrooms, places to eat, cafeteria, credit unions, mail room, and other service areas.
 - Introduce them to administrative support staff and explain their roles and procedures, such as filling out time sheets, ordering or requesting supplies, requesting repair services, arranging travel, etc., as appropriate.
5. **Training support:** If appropriate (and agreed to by the supervisor), assist in training the new employee.
6. **Resource support:** Identify resources to help the new employee.

What a New Employee Expects from a Sponsor

1. Advice, guidance, encouragement, and a positive attitude.
2. Confidentiality—information shared with you stays between you and the new employee.
3. Open and honest communication, especially if feedback is requested.
4. Help in understanding the culture of the organization and the Army.
5. Help in understanding how to get things done.
6. Assistance in building networks and relationships within the work group and team, and with internal and external clients.
7. Insight into how to make relationships with people effective and productive.
8. Insight into how to balance office communications—email, telephone, in-person, etc.



Tips for Sponsors

- Don't worry about being perceived as the "expert." Your experience is important to the new employee. At the same time, you don't have to have all their answers.
- Be patient and positive. It takes time to develop a relationship. Don't try to cover everything right away. Sponsors need to allow enough time for the new employee to learn and grow.
- Don't try to force a relationship.
- Look for a preferred style of communication.
- Realize and respect that the new employee may have a different style from your own. Let them develop in their own way.
- Remember that listening may be more important than giving advice in some instances.
- Don't be judgmental and be careful not to draw conclusions without exploring why someone feels or acts the way they do. Keep in mind that there is another side to the story. When the new employee comes to you with a problem or complaint, this is the time to listen and ask questions.

Sponsor Checklist

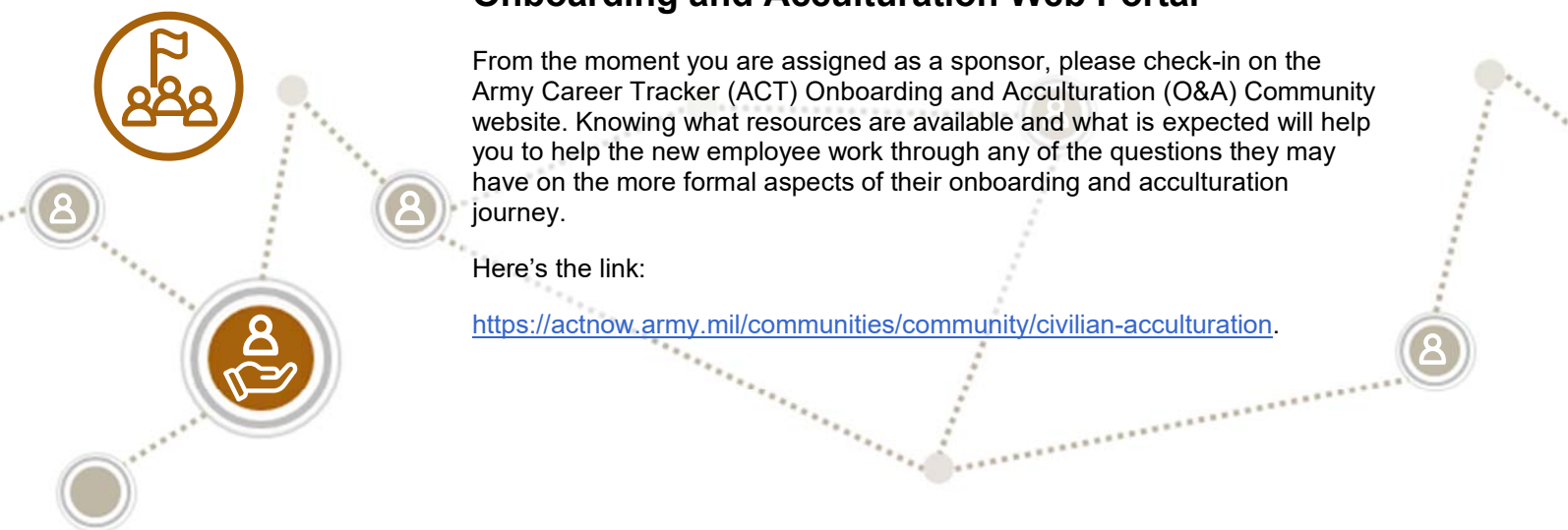
To assist you in your sponsor duties, use the checklist on the following pages as your guide for a productive and rewarding experience.

Onboarding and Acculturation Web Portal

From the moment you are assigned as a sponsor, please check-in on the Army Career Tracker (ACT) Onboarding and Acculturation (O&A) Community website. Knowing what resources are available and what is expected will help you to help the new employee work through any of the questions they may have on the more formal aspects of their onboarding and acculturation journey.

Here's the link:

<https://actnow.army.mil/communities/community/civilian-acculturation>.



ANNEX: SPONSOR'S CHECKLIST FOR ONBOARDING NEW ARMY CIVILIANS

Sponsor Role and Responsibilities

- Serve from the time of firm offer acceptance until 30 to 60 days after new employee's arrival.
- Provide the new employee information they need about the organization and local area (e.g., temporary lodging, local transportation, etc., if applicable).
- Create a welcoming environment for the new employee and help them integrate into the team.
- Maintain daily contact with new employee for first week and then on an as-needed basis.
- Be available to answer day-to-day questions.
- Help define the Army Profession and explain the organizational culture, including the informal rules of behavior and how things work.
- Be a positive role model and promote a positive image of the organization.
- Work with supervisor and new employee to assist with the onboarding and acculturation process.
- Consult with supervisor for further guidance as needed.

NOTE: In the event no sponsor is assigned, actions showing this symbol (★) will need to be accomplished by the supervisor or delegated by the supervisor to other staff member(s).

New Employee Information

Employee Name: _____	Start Date: _____
Position Title: _____	Assigned Sponsor: _____
Contact Telephone Number: _____	Supervisor/Rater: _____
Contact Email: _____	Higher Level Reviewer: _____

PLANNING FOR SUCCESS:

Within Three (3) Days of Formal Job Offer and Acceptance (As Confirmed by CPAC)

- ☐ 1. Volunteer for or accept sponsor assignment and meet with supervisor to discuss your role as a sponsor for the new employee.
- ☐ 2. Send email or welcome letter to new employee introducing yourself, welcoming them to the team and Army, and providing both email and telephone contact information.
 - Access and customize “Sponsor Letter to New Employee Template” from the Army Career Tracker (ACT) Onboarding and Acculturation (O&A) Community.
- ☐ 3. ★ Call new employee (if telephone contact information is available) and inquire as to what, if any, assistance they need in transitioning into the new job and/or area.

PLANNING FOR SUCCESS:

At Least One (1) Week Before Start Date

- ☐ 4. Arrange your schedule to be available on new employee's first day.
- ☐ 5. ★ Contact new employee by phone or email to:
 - Reiterate basic information for first day (e.g., directions, parking, report time, dress code, and lunch information).
 - Arrange to accompany new employee to lunch on their first day following Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) or designated personnel office in-processing.
- ☐ 6. ★ Contact new employee by phone or email and arrange to meet with new employee to escort them after the initial CPAC or designated personnel office in-processing. Be specific about time and place you will meet the new employee.
- ☐ 7. ★ Notify or pre-register with security office at visitor registration (if applicable).
- ☐ 8. ★ If delegated by supervisor, assemble a welcome package with helpful information such as contact names and phone lists, site map, parking and transportation information, mission and values and other important information about your organization, organizational charts, job-specific information, resources list, websites, and other reference sources used.

MAKING A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION:

First Day

- ☐ 9. ★ Meet new employee following CPAC or designated personnel office in-processing at arranged location and time.
- ☐ 10. ★ Escort new employee to the security office to receive building pass (if applicable).
- ☐ 11. ★ Escort new employee to their workstation (if applicable).
- ☐ 12. ★ Introduce the new employee to department staff and key personnel.
- ☐ 13. ★ Explain how the new employee can get additional supplies.
- ☐ 14. ★ Provide department or building-specific safety and emergency information.
- ☐ 15. If delegated this responsibility by the supervisor, give the new employee a tour of the facility, including the following areas:
 - Office/Desk/Workstation
 - Copy Centers
 - Printers
 - Kitchen/Cafeteria/Break Areas
 - Emergency Exits and Procedures
 - Fax Machines
 - Restrooms
 - Mail Rooms
 - Bulletin Boards
 - Authorized Work Areas
 - Security Office
 - Conference Rooms
 - Parking
 - Office Supplies
 - Tools/Equipment
 - Coffee/Water/Vending Machines.
- ☐ 16. ★ Accompany new employee to lunch, as pre-arranged; consider inviting one or more other staff/team members to join you.

- ☐ 17. If delegated this responsibility by the supervisor, review general administrative procedures:
 - Keys/Access Cards (Building and Computer)
 - Telephone Alert Roster
 - Picture ID Badges
 - Telephone Access Policy and Procedures
 - Building and/or Computer Access Cards (CACs).

- ☐ 18. Ensure new employee is aware of and keeps initial appointment with new supervisor.

- ☐ 19. Review welcome package information with the new employee and answer any questions.

MAKING A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION:

Within First Week

- ☐ 20. Assist new employee with getting CAC, including direction to the Real-Time Automated Personnel Identification System (RAPIDS) site, if needed.
- ☐ 21. Assist employee with setting up computer, email, voicemail, etc., unless supervisor assigns this task to another staff member.
- ☐ 22. Ask the new employee if they need assistance with establishing ACT account and selecting first and second level supervisors.
- ☐ 23. Assist new employee with accessing GoArmyEd, Army CPOL MyBiz, Center for the Army Profession and Ethic (CAPE) Civilian Video: <http://cape.army.mil/civilians.php>, and other resources that will assist with understanding the mission and vision of the Army and role of Civilians.
- ☐ 24. Continue to make yourself available by phone, email, or for in-person meetings.
- ☐ 25. Offer guidance to help the new employee integrate smoothly and share helpful hints.

Within First 30 to 60 Days

- ☐ 26. Check in regularly with new employee during the first few weeks.
- ☐ 27. Assist new employee with understanding DoD, Army, and organizational culture.
- ☐ 28. Assist new employee in learning about Military rank and insignia and titles of address for Senior Civilians.

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- ☐ 29. ★ Provide information regarding volunteer activities or social events (award ceremonies, team lunches, off-duty sports programs, base child care and youth sports programs, etc.) available at our work location, if appropriate.
 - Be sure to invite the new employee to participate in any organization/team social events that are scheduled.
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- ☐ 30. ★ Create opportunities for the new employee to interact with other employees in the organization.

Helpful Links and Information

Forms and Resources:

- ☐ ACT: <https://actnow.army.mil/>
- ☐ GoArmyEd: <https://www.goarmyed.com/>
- ☐ CAPE Civilian Video: <http://cape.army.mil/civilians.php>
- ☐ New Army Civilian Checklist (webpage link TBD)
- ☐ Supervisor Checklist (webpage link TBD)
- ☐ New Army Civilian Guide (webpage link TBD)

Required Training:

- ☐ Cyber Security User Portal/Information Assurance Training: <https://cs.signal.army.mil/DoDIAA/>
- ☐ Civilian Education System (CES) and Supervisor Development Course (SDC) enrollment (requires a CAC): <https://www.atrrs.army.mil/channels/chrtas/student/logon.aspx>
- ☐ Army Regulation (AR) 350-1, Army Training and Leader Development (requires a CAC): https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/ARN6701_AR350-1_Web_FINAL.pdf

Any additional organizational requirements.