

## Onboarding Toolkit for Inclusive Employers

*Practical Tools for Employers Ready to Open the Door to Opportunity*

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### Introduction






Effective onboarding is critical for the long-term success of any employee — but it's especially important when hiring justice-impacted individuals. A strong onboarding process builds trust, reduces early turnover, and ensures your new team member feels supported and empowered from day one.

This toolkit offers practical tips, checklists, and guidance to help inclusive employers onboard second-chance employees successfully and sustainably.

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### 1. Pre-Onboarding Preparation

Before the First Day:

-  Assign a dedicated point of contact (supervisor, HR rep, or mentor)
  -  Share expectations about the first week via email or phone
  -  Prepare all necessary materials: ID badges, uniforms, equipment, etc.
  -  Brief existing team members about your company's second-chance hiring values
  -  Review relevant legal or compliance documents (e.g., bonding, WOTC forms)
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### 2. First-Day Checklist

Welcome and Orientation:

-  Greet the new hire warmly — reinforce that they're part of the team
-  Give a clear overview of the company's mission, structure, and values
-  Go over job duties, performance expectations, and who to contact for help

- ☒ Introduce coworkers and assign a peer mentor or buddy
  - ☒ Offer a facility tour and orientation to break room, restrooms, parking, etc.
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### 3. Early Support and Relationship Building

Within the First Week:

- ☒ Schedule a 1:1 check-in with their supervisor to build rapport
  - ☒ Provide an outline of the training schedule and upcoming tasks
  - ☒ Normalize questions and reassure them about asking for clarification
  - ☒ Ask about any barriers or needs (e.g., transportation, schedule conflicts)
  - ☒ Reinforce confidentiality and workplace respect
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### 4. Trauma-Informed Communication Tips





Justice-impacted individuals may have past experiences that shape how they receive feedback and navigate authority. Here's how to communicate with care:

-  Use strengths-based language: "You did well on..."
  -  Avoid shaming or overly formal discipline language
  -  Be direct, consistent, and transparent in expectations
  -  Create space for self-advocacy and questions
  -  Acknowledge effort and celebrate wins early and often
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### 5. Ongoing Integration & Retention






Over the First 90 Days:

- ☒ Offer consistent feedback and performance reviews

-  Monitor progress toward goals — celebrate milestones
  -  Be flexible where possible (e.g., time off for court-ordered obligations)
  -  Encourage skill development and promotion pathways
  -  Solicit feedback from the employee about the onboarding experience
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## 6. Company-Wide Inclusion Practices

The onboarding process shouldn't exist in a vacuum. Consider reinforcing your inclusive culture in the following ways:


-  Incorporate second-chance stories into newsletters or staff meetings
  -  Provide ongoing DEI training that includes criminal justice inclusion
  -  Maintain a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination or harassment
  -  Partner with local reentry or workforce organizations
  -  Celebrate second-chance hires as a part of your brand mission
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## Optional Resources and Tools

- Sample onboarding checklist (available as downloadable PDF)
  - Supervisor guide to supporting justice-impacted employees
  - Peer mentorship onboarding template
  - Your Path Back onboarding support consultation
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## You're Not Alone in This

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