

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE ONBOARDING CHECKLIST

PRE-BOARDING

The goal of the pre-boarding phase is to plan and prepare for the executive's arrival and to ensure the executive's successful entrance into the organization.

- Provide the executive with:
 - Bios and resumes of direct reports
 - Required applications and forms (e.g., benefits, ethics information, travel card application)

(Encourage the executive to review and complete necessary paperwork before the first employment day.)

- Work with security to ensure timely clearance processing.
- Work with IT and Facilities to coordinate work space so the executive has an appropriate parking space, office, equipment, identification, PDA/Blackberry, etc.
- Order nameplates, flags and business cards.
- Pre-populate the executive's calendar with tasks in the framework as well as other essential activities and training. This will demonstrate leadership support for the strategic onboarding of the executive as well as help ensure the executive takes the necessary time to complete the specific tasks (e.g., meetings with mentor/sponsor/coach, lunch with senior leaders, formal feedback sessions).
- Create a list of key stakeholders and agency leaders with name, title, phone number and email address. Provide to the executive on the first day.
- Assign an executive sponsor. A sponsor accelerates the new executive's ability to quickly address and properly deal with early confusing issues. Questions about "normal protocol" in the organization, finding the right people to go to for information, correct procedures, and learning what is "right" and "wrong" should be easily answered by a sponsor. Be sure the sponsor knows his or her responsibilities. Provide a checklist if possible.
- Assign a mentor to help immerse the executive into the culture of the organization.
- Assign a coach to help the executive progress in his or her current position, as well as with individual development and career goals.

- ❑ Develop a briefing book or website with:
 - Key information about the agency (e.g., structure and mission, background, financial information)
 - Organizational chart and phone book
 - Photos and bios of key executives
 - List of acronyms
 - Message from the Director/Head of Agency
 - Benefits, work life programs, transit subsidy information
 - Required training information
 - List of recurring meetings
 - Maps and building information
 - Payroll calendar
 - Information of personal interest (e.g., information packet on local schools and realtors)
- ❑ Obtain items with the agency logo or brand to give on the first day as welcome gifts – a nice touch to say we are glad you are here and you are a part of our team.
- ❑ Schedule mandatory training (e.g., IT security, ethics, No Fear Act, performance management, employee and labor relations, Hatch Act, EEO, diversity awareness).
- ❑ Executive should provide direct reports and staff with a bio, photo and a letter of introduction.

DAY 1/WEEK 1

The goal of the first day is to ensure the executive is welcomed into the organization by senior leadership and new staff and is satisfactorily in-processed. The remainder of the week should be dedicated to deliberate introduction and acclimation of the executive into the organization as well as training to help the executive understand pitfalls and critical issues.

- ❑ Welcome the executive by conducting a swearing-in ceremony, including the executive's family, photo and a press release.
- ❑ Introduce the executive to direct reports, staff, senior leaders, etc.
- ❑ Produce an article for agency publication to note the arrival of the executive.
- ❑ Executive should complete any paperwork and security requirements that were not completed during the pre-boarding phase.
- ❑ Conduct an executive briefing, transition meeting or other forum to provide the executive with information about the work group. The briefing should include:
 - The 12-month calendar and a letter from the previous executive to gain a perspective on organizational history, culture, priorities and "lessons learned"
 - Fact sheets on the "hot issues" that will require the executive's attention within

the first 90 days

- A quick introduction to personnel policies and rules (financial “dos and don’ts”, acquisitions, hiring, firing, contractor support)
- A discussion of initial projects and roles and responsibilities, including past performance standards
- Training and information designed to provide initial familiarity with crucial systems and procedures. These are crash courses but will serve their purpose by making executives aware immediately of vital systems, laws, procedures, etc.
- Introduce the executive to his or her assigned mentor and sponsor.
- Executive should review the list of key contacts and stakeholders and begin to schedule introductory calls/meetings.
- Meet with executive to ensure job roles and responsibilities are clearly communicated.
- Take the executive to lunch.
- Executive should meet with direct reports and staff.
- Executive should attend any necessary training as described in the pre-boarding phase.
- Executive should create an action plan. This can take the form of a set of strategic questions an executive should ask and get the answers to over time, in order to better understand the agency and his or her role in contributing to the organization. (See Appendix A of the OPM manual “Hit the Ground Running: Establishing a Model Executive Onboarding Program” for a list of sample strategic questions.)
- Register for the OPM SES Briefing for New Executives
<https://www.leadership.opm.gov/planning/sesbriefings/index.aspx>.
- Provide the executive with the resources, tools and time to successfully accomplish tasks in this phase.

FIRST 30 DAYS

The goal within the first 30 days is to establish roles and responsibilities of the new executive as they relate to performance, development and ethical behavior. Executives should also begin to build relationships and business partnerships.

- Finalize the executive’s performance objectives.
- Executive should create an Executive Development Plan (EDP) with his or her manager and solicit input from coach/mentor.
- Executive should schedule a formal feedback session with his or her manager and coach/mentor.
- Facilitate networking opportunities and provide resources to make networking

possible.

- Discuss with the executive his or her individual work styles and preferences.
- Executive should meet with his or her coach.
- Executive should seek out unwritten rules (e.g., how to get things done; who can help and who can't or won't; what to do and, more importantly, what not to do) with mentor, sponsor and peers—this could be included in the risk assessment initiated in week 1.
- Executive should begin scheduling appointments with key stakeholders from other organizations (e.g., programs, policies, and budget). Executive should consult with his or her manager or mentor to identify stakeholders.
- Provide the executive with the resources, tools and time to successfully accomplish tasks in this phase.
- Contact the executive to get feedback on his or her experience after 30 days.

FIRST 90 DAYS

The goal within the first 90 days is to cultivate the new executive by building competence in the job and providing frequent opportunities for open forum discussions. Executives should begin to have a full workload while managers monitor performance and provide early feedback.

- Executive should identify professional development opportunities.
- Executive should develop an action plan based on answers to the strategic questions provided in Week 1.
- Executive should review performance objectives with his or her manager.
- Provide the executive with the resources, tools and time to successfully accomplish tasks in this phase.
- Contact the executive to get feedback on his or her experience after 90 days.

6 TO 9 MONTHS

The goal within the first 6 months is to provide guidance and feedback to the executive to ensure continued success and to make plans for his or her future with the organization.

- Executive should engage in a leadership assessment process (e.g., 360, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) for developmental purposes and to identify areas for improvement; follow up with coaching and/or an action plan if appropriate.
- Executive should schedule a formal feedback session with his or her manager.
- Executive should reflect on his or her role with coach/mentor.
- Executive should revisit the EDP to assess professional development goals and track progress.
- Provide the executive with the resources, tools and time to successfully accomplish

tasks in this phase.

- Contact the executive to get feedback on his or her experience after 6 months.
- Notify the Hiring Manager the probationary period is ending.

1 YEAR

The goal within the first year is to monitor performance, individual development, goals and desires and to engage the executive in advancing the mission of the organization.

- Executive should complete a 360° assessment (or other leadership assessment process) in addition to the annual performance appraisal.
- Executive should develop a roadmap for long-term success.
- Provide an anniversary pin and card from the Secretary/Director.
- Provide the executive with the resources, tools and time to successfully accomplish tasks in this phase.
- Follow up to ensure executive has attended the OPM SES Briefing.
- Contact the executive to get feedback on his or her experience after 1 year.
- Close out and assess next steps.

The onboarding process may conclude 1 year after the incoming executive's arrival, with a final 360° assessment or other leadership review. This provides the leader with additional feedback and an opportunity to see if change efforts are working as intended.