



Onboarding Essentials

For Property Management Leaders & HR Teams

**Onboarding should be an
experience, not a task.**



Onboarding refers to the process of a new employee acquiring the necessary knowledge, skills, and behaviors to become effective members of an organization.

The goal of onboarding is to help new hires adjust to their roles, understand the company's history, culture and expectations, and feel welcomed and prepared for their new position.

Why Onboarding Matters for Your Organization

Effective onboarding not only helps new employees feel connected but also delivers numerous organizational benefits:

1

Retention

A good start to an employee's experience matters and can increase the likelihood of an employee's retention by up to 82%. Good onboarding leads to retention which reduces turnover costs.

Turnover costs can range from 50% to 200% of their annual salary. Consider this when the cost or effort of onboarding seems overwhelming.

2

Engagement

A thoughtful onboarding program can make new employees feel welcomed and part of the team. This leads to increased connection with colleagues and the company.

3

Performance

Having a clear sense of understanding of what is expected of the employee is important and increases the employee's ability to contribute and can quicken the time it takes to become productive faster.

4

Brand Advocacy

Engaged and happy employees are more likely to be ambassadors for your company and brand both internally and externally.

5

Cost Savings

A consistent onboarding program can help reduce errors by ensuring that the employee is properly trained and are clear on their roles and responsibilities from the beginning of their tenure.

Onboarding vs. Orientation

Orientation is a component of an overarching onboarding process. It focuses on completing necessary paperwork and providing basic information about the company, including:

Orientation often includes:

✓ History, mission, vision and values

✓ Policies, procedures and benefits

✓ Organizational structure

✓ Workplace rules

✓ Safety guidelines



Orientation

Orientation can be as simple as sending an introductory packet of forms to be filled out before the new hire's first day or scheduling time to complete paperwork.

While there are forms that need to be filled out, **onboarding isn't orientation.**

Onboarding

Onboarding should focus on equipping new employees with the skills and knowledge needed to perform their roles effectively, rather than being centered solely on administrative tasks, even though these are essential.



Onboarding is a Team Sport

Onboarding is most effective when it involves multiple teams and contributors. HR, managers, and other departments like IT should collaborate to create a seamless experience for new hires. Using a shared checklist can ensure that all departments fulfill their role in supporting the new hire.



It is important that all involved are accountable for their role in the process and that they play their part. Collaborate and consider a shareable checklist to hold departments and individuals responsible for their onboarding role.

Keys for Managers & Onboarding

While onboarding is a team sport, oftentimes the burden of onboarding does fall to the managers. It is important that managers plan appropriately for onboarding a new hire. Block out time to ensure that the new hire's experience is positive. Consider the following:



Consider scheduling time each day with your new hire to ensure that their training does not get neglected.



Identify key markers for training and make them clear to the new hire as a way to set expectations for both the individual and for the training.



Protect the time with your new hire. The alternative is spending that time to recruit, interview, hire and train their replacement.



Onboarding for Residential Property Management

1

Familiarization with Property (or portfolio)

Ensure the new employee is familiarized with the property or properties they'll be working or managing. Walk the property with each new employee to ensure that they understand the layout, amenities and unique property-specific details and are not left to do so on their own.

2

Lease Agreement and Policies

Understanding the lease agreement or other related policies can be overwhelming. Provide training opportunities to new employees on the lease, rental policies and other procedures specific to your company. Check out classes on the lease and Redbook Online at your local apartment association or Texas Apartment Association ([TAA](#)).

3

Resident Relations

Provide company-specific training on best practices for addressing resident concerns, handling complaints, and resolving issues. Address the importance of excellent customer service to develop and maintain positive relations with residents.



Onboarding for Residential Property Management

4

Maintenance

All employees, maintenance or not, have a role to play in working together to support the maintenance team and residents' needs. All employees need to understand how to handle maintenance requests, and ask the right questions to provide the maintenance team with as much information as possible.

5

Safety & Security Policies

Explaining safety and security procedures for the properties is essential. It is important that they are walked through the procedures and where to find information and related materials in the event of an actual emergency. Ensure that the protocols discussed include fire safety measures, weather-related planning, security measures and includes access control systems and surveillance systems.

6

Compliance

In addition to understanding the lease, the new employee must understand all relevant laws and regulations. This should include fair housing, landlord-tenant regulations and other pieces of training as determined by your company.



Onboarding for Residential Property Management

7

Technology & Systems

New team members should have their email and other login information available to them immediately. Computers and any other devices necessary for their positions should be set up and ready for use on day 1. Plan for initial ongoing training on all software or technology platforms used for the individuals' specific position or those used company-wide.

8

Training & Development

Offering ongoing training and development to new and existing employees benefits them and is a must to keep your company learning and growing. By continuing to provide resources to your new employee and allowing them the support to grow with your company can be a key indicator for the length of time you'll retain that employee.

In addition to a training & development department, if you have one, those seeking more learning opportunities should check out their local apartment association or the Texas Apartment Association.



Onboarding for Residential Property Management

9

Performance goals and metrics

Now is the time to set clear performance metrics and goals for the new employee as related to their position. Goal setting is an important and worthwhile exercise to take with each new employee to involve them in their career path and performance planning.

Onboarding helps set up your new employee for success but it's also a key indicator for retaining. It is also important to stick to the company-assigned schedule. If you commit to performance reviews, it is management's responsibility to see this process through.

10

Feedback and Support

Ask new employees for feedback on the onboarding experience and the chance to suggest how the process might be improved. Asking for feedback demonstrates that employees' feedback is valued. That said, asking for feedback without making and demonstrating changes can undo this positive step.

Ensure that employees know who to reach out to with questions. Consider a list of numbers/emails upon starting so they feel empowered to reach out as needed.

Onboarding Hacks & Best Practices

These are just a few ways to create a memorable and positive onboarding experience. Consider how some of these ideas might work for your company:

➤ Personalized Welcome Kit

Having a personalized welcome kit or gift for new employees can make the new hire feel valued, appreciated and excited for their employment. A welcome kit can include company swag, office supplies, and should include a handwritten note from a manager or executive.

➤ Buddy system

Having a “buddy” or mentor who a new employee feels comfortable with asking questions and getting support from can be extremely helpful. It provides the new hire with an instant connection and a sense of belonging within the team.

➤ Meeting colleagues

Make sure that new hires receive facilitated introductions to other employees that will be important to their work. If necessary, set up calls with key staff members not at the same location or are remote.

➤ Gamified Learning

Like many things, onboarding can be more fun if part of a game. Turn training modules and company policies into interactive games or puzzles.

➤ Welcome Lunch/Coffee

Make sure that there is a plan to take a new hire to lunch or coffee to welcome them to the team in a comfortable setting that allows for casual social interaction.

➤ Get Feedback & Continue to Improve

Continue to improve your onboarding program and seek feedback from your new employees. Consider instituting a 30-day check-in with all new hires to collect feedback about the recruiting and onboarding process. Taking their feedback seriously and making changes as needed will make your program better with each employee going forward.

Value of Apartment Associations

As a member of an apartment association, you and your employees will find several valuable benefits and services that can enhance your business operations, improve professionalism, and foster community within the multifamily housing industry.

Apartment Associations provide advocacy and representation, education and training, professional development, networking opportunities, and much more. These associations also help ensure the multifamily housing industry operates efficiently, ethically, and profitably, making them an indispensable partner for their member companies.

Apartment association members represent a broad cross-section of the apartment industry, including apartment owner-operators, builders-developers, management companies and product and service businesses that serve the multifamily industry.

In Texas, as a member of a local apartment association, you are a member of the Texas Apartment Association and the National Apartment Association. As a TAA member, companies have access to the Click & Lease Program and the TAA Redbook.

Find Your Local Apartment Association 



Apartment Association of Central Texas	Apartment Association of Greater Dallas	Apartment Association of Southeast Texas	Apartment Association of the Panhandle
<p>Harker Heights, TX 76548 254.432.7593 http://www.aactonline.org/ (Includes Copperas Cove)</p>	<p>Irving, TX 75038 972.385.9091 http://aagdallas.com/</p>	<p>Beaumont, TX 77706 409.899.4455 http://www.setxaa.org/</p>	<p>Amarillo, TX 79106 806.355.6391 http://www.aapanhandle.com/</p>
Austin Apartment Association	Big Country Apartment Association	Bryan/College Station Apartment Association	Corpus Christi Apartment Association
<p>Austin, TX 78757 512.323.0990 http://www.austinaptassoc.com/</p>	<p>Abilene, TX 79608 325.695.7431 http://affiliate.naahq.org/big-country-apartment-association</p>	<p>Bryan, TX 77802 979.260.9842 http://bcsaa.com/</p>	<p>Corpus Christi, TX 78413 361.852.2787 https://www.ccapartments.org/</p>
Corsicana Apartment Association	El Paso Apartment Association	Fort Worth Apartment Association	Galveston County Apartment Association
<p>Corsicana, TX 75151-0956 903.467.7545</p>	<p>El Paso, TX 79925 915.598.0800 http://www.epaa.org/</p>	<p>Fort Worth, TX 76118 817.284.1121 http://www.aatcnet.org/</p>	<p>Galveston, TX 77551 409.762.8339</p>
Greater Longview Area Apartment Association	Heart of Texas Apartment Association	Houston Apartment Association	Lubbock Apartment Association
<p>Longview, TX 75605 903.759.3966</p>	<p>Waco, TX 76710 254.776.5451 http://htaaonline.com/ (Excludes Copperas Cove)</p>	<p>Houston, TX 77041 713.595.0300 https://www.haaonline.org/</p>	<p>Lubbock, TX 79423 806.794.2037 https://www.laamembers.com/</p>

North Texas Rental Properties Association	Permian Basin Apartment Association	Piney Woods Apartment Association	Rio Grande Valley Apartment Association
<p>Wichita Falls, TX 76306 940.855.1100</p>	<p>Midland, TX 79711 432.563.1278 http://www.pbaatx.org/</p>	<p>Nacogdoches, TX 75965 936.569.6690 http://www.pwaa.net/</p>	<p>Weslaco, TX 78596 956.994.9995</p>
San Angelo Apartment Association	San Antonio Apartment Association	Tyler Apartment Association	Victoria Apartment Association
<p>San Angelo, TX 76901 325.942.1332 http://www.sanangeloptas.com/</p>	<p>San Antonio, TX 78249 210.692.7797 http://www.saaaonline.org/</p>	<p>Tyler, TX 75711 903.594.8864 https://tylerapartmentassociation.com/</p>	<p>Victoria, TX 77904 361.572.4686 http://www.VAAOnline.org</p>



Texas Apartment Association:
<https://taa.org>



National Apartment Association:
<https://naahq.org>



