

2018 NASPE AWARD

Eugene H. Rooney, Jr. Award Nomination
Innovative State Human Resource Management Program

Program Title: MassCareers Onboarding Pilot

State: Massachusetts

Contact Person: Ronald J. Arigo

Contact's Title: Chief Human Resources Officer

Agency: Human Resources Division

Mailing Address: 1 Ashburton Place, 3rd Floor, Boston, MA 02108

Telephone: 617-878-9703

Fax: 617-878-9880

Email: ronald.arigo@MassMail.State.MA.US

1. Please provide a brief description of this program:

The Onboarding pilot developed and tested a variety of enhancements to the Commonwealth's newly automated onboarding process, called MassCareers. The enhancements aimed to improve the new hire's experience during the onboarding process by, among other things: streamlining the forms completed online; accepting electronic signatures on certain forms; and, creating informative communications to the new hire through automated email and videos embedded into MassCareers. The enhancements also include a new set of automated communications to hiring managers featuring checklists which alerted them to key tasks and deadlines related to their new hires' start date and throughout the first six months. A new website was created as a central repository for resource materials related to onboarding and training was offered to hiring managers to clarify the importance of their role in successfully onboarding their new hires. Finally, the enhancements streamlined the HR staff user experience, making it easier and faster for them to review and print new hire paperwork.

2. How long has this program been operational (month/year)?

The onboarding pilot ran at the Department of Public Health March 14, 2017 through August 8, 2017. On August 8, 2017, the enhancements were rolled out to all agencies across the Commonwealth.

3. Why was this program created? (What problem(s) or issues does it address?)

Since onboarding is a critical driver of early retention, establishing a robust program is important as an estimated 33% of new hires look for new jobs in the first 6 months (Technology Can Save Onboarding from Itself, Harvard Business Review, 3/25/15). The pilot sought to address a variety of issues including an inconsistent onboarding experience across various agencies, hiring managers not fully understanding their role and the impact their actions have on the new hires' willingness to commit to their new jobs, and HR staff having difficulty locating and printing new hire paperwork. There were also issues specific to the Employee Benefits Orientation (new hire orientation) such as many new hires did not fill out paperwork online so the Orientation took much longer and required the printing of many more hard copy documents; new hires being overwhelmed by the amount of information given to them all at once at Orientation; and managing the new hires' expectation around what would be covered in the Orientation.

Ultimately, the Commonwealth wants to provide a consistent and positive onboarding experience for all its new hires which enables them to become productive and engaged in their new role.

4. Why is the program a new and creative method?

The scope of the issues and the solutions implemented by the pilot were significant. The various roles in onboarding -- new hires, hiring managers and HR staff -- each had their own set of concerns which were identified through surveys, focus groups and discussions and then addressed by the solutions implemented by the pilot.

From a technology standpoint, many innovative elements were included: automated emails, informative video clips, electronic signatures, ensuring that only relevant forms were

viewed by each new hire and the creation of a new website with resources for new hires and hiring managers.

In addition, the training needs of hiring managers were addressed through classroom-based training to clarify their role, identify the resources available to them and outline the benefits of successfully onboarding a new hire.

Throughout the process of the pilot and the subsequent rollout to all Executive Branch agencies, communication played an integral role in keeping stakeholders informed, managing the expectations and highlighting the benefits of the various components.

5. What were the program's start-up costs? (Provide detailed information about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.)

Building on the existing MassCareers system, the pilot utilized a partnership of internal resources of HR staff from the Human Resources Division (HRD), the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) and the Department of Public Health (DPH) as well as the Director of Training at DPH. The technical resources were provided by HRD and EOHHS.

6. What are the program's operational costs?

Aside from the annual cost of MassCareers (\$277,200), the online applicant tracking system, and the salaries of the internal resources (HR staff, Trainers and hiring managers) there are no operational costs.

7. How is the program funded?

The cost of MassCareers is funded through a chargeback to the agencies.

8. Did the program originate in your state? Yes.

9. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? No.

10. How do you measure the success of this program?

We conducted focus groups with new hires and hiring managers both before and after the pilot. Perhaps the most significant metric was when new hires were asked prior to the pilot to rate their readiness to start their first day of work on a scale of 1 to 10, they rated themselves a 5. After the pilot, we asked the same question to recent new hires who rated themselves an 8.8.

Surveys were sent to new hires and hiring managers after the pilot and the results were encouraging:

Survey Results from New Hires

88% found MassCareers easy to navigate

83% had the tools/resources to fill out forms online and/or in the new hire orientation

83% have regularly scheduled meetings with their supervisor

100% felt welcome and supported in new role

Survey Results from Hiring Managers

100% understood their role in onboarding

100% found the emails helpful

94% found the checklists helpful

94% felt the onboarding helped the new hire assimilate and become productive more quickly

11. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

The pilot program was run at the Department of Public Health and, upon the successful completion, was expanded to all agencies across the Commonwealth in August 2017. Since that rollout, a standardized PowerPoint presentation has been implemented for all Employee Benefits Orientations across the Commonwealth enabling a more consistent onboarding experience for all new hires. Currently, HR is working on establishing Agency Orientations which provide information specific to the new hire's Agency such as leadership team, mission and vision, scope of service, etc. Finally, the classroom training for hiring managers will be offered as an eLearning allowing for just-in-time training.

MassCareers Onboarding Pilot Program Summary

In November 2015, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts began implementing a new online applicant tracking system called MassCareers. Several years later, in an effort to determine how the system was functioning, the Human Resources Division conducted focus groups, sent surveys and talked with HR staff to identify areas that needed improvement. Based on the information gathered, the focus was channeled into three primary areas: enhancements to MassCareers, improvements in communications and the training of hiring managers.

Enhancements were made to MassCareers by re-ordering the pages in the online process, ensuring the only necessary and relevant forms were seen by the new hire, adding two instructional videos and adopting the use of electronic signatures for certain forms. Additional enhancements made it easier for HR staff to locate and print the necessary forms for Employee Benefits Orientation. In terms of communication, auto-generated emails are now sent to the new hire and the hiring manager throughout the onboarding process instructing the recipient of next steps. Resources provided to hiring managers include a classroom-based training and a website with resources dedicated to successfully onboarding their new hire.

As a result of our efforts, significantly more new hires are filling out paperwork online reducing the amount of time needed and the number of hard copy printouts required for the Employee Benefits Orientation. Both hiring managers and new hires are given just-in-time information throughout the process and new hires are given a consistent, standardized and positive onboarding experience which re-enforces their decision to join the Commonwealth.