NASPE Eugene H. Rooney, Jr.

Award Nomination

Innovative State Human Resource Management Program

"New Employee Orientation"

State of Delaware

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1. Brief description

We recognize that the first day on the job should be a pleasant and exciting experience for our new employees. That first day should be about meeting new co-workers, learning about their new duties and becoming a productive member of their team. Our hope is that their first day will provide them with a positive first impression of the state and their new work environment. By directing new employees to the online orientation prior to their start date this allows them to complete the majority of the onboarding process before their first day of work, alleviating a significant amount of stress brought on by information "overload".

In 2011, staff responded to one of the Governor's initiatives to "Go Green", by creating the State's first innovative online New Employee Orientation (NEO) to replace the inconsistent, labor intensive in-house orientations offered by each agency Human Resources office throughout the state. This initiative required a comprehensive overview and the eventual streamlining of our previous new hire processes and practices to make the NEO more consistent, efficient and more user friendly. The orientation includes a review of all related policies, procedures, benefits training materials, and so much more to be viewed from the comfort of their own home. This also provides a more relaxed environment for them to discuss their benefit selections with their spouse/partner. The NEO modules provide them with the foundation, knowledge, tools, and resources that they need to prepare for their journey as a new state employee. All along the way they will also have additional resources at their fingertips through helpful hyperlinks found throughout the orientation. And, at any time they can feel free to contact their HR Benefits representatives if they need additional information.

2. **How long has the submission been operational?**

Our New Employee Orientation modules have been operational since January of 2011.

3. **Why was the program created?**

The NEO was created to improve the new hire experience but also was in direct response to the Governor's "Go Green" initiatives. These modules were developed to provide easy, clear and concise information for use by all new and current employees. In addition, we have provided them with the option to use either an audio or printed version on each topic as they view the orientation. Our modules are continually being updated to provide them with the most current and up-to-date information. We feel that by keeping our workforce informed about information that directly concerns and effects them in the workplace that this will provide us with another tool in our ongoing retention efforts.

Some of the benefits gained from the online orientation process include, but are not limited to: reducing travel time for employees to attend off-site orientations; minimizing time and costs associated with massive printing of orientation materials; the ability to welcome employees to the state with ease of access to consistent and up-to-date information; and the opportunity to develop a step-by-step instructional manual for HR staff across the state resulting in a more efficient, clear and concise training tool for current and future staff in the onboarding process.

4. **Why is this program a new and creative method?**

The NEO is new and creative, because it puts all of the new hires information at their fingertips. Our main page includes the five modules, checklists, forms, Agency specific information, policies, required training and many other resources. And you can't forget our part-time employees, they have a separate module just for them! We also make it a great resource for all employees as they can find answers to many of their questions in one place long after they have started with the state. We also incorporated a welcome video from the Governor, provided employees with an option to use either an audio or printed version on each topic as they view the orientation and quick resource links to find out more information.

5. **What was the program's startup costs?**

The startup costs were minimal. We did have to purchase a license for the Learning Management software. We invested approximately just over 900 employee hours for the research, design and building of the website and modules in the learning management software which accounts for approximately $20,000. With that said, we saved the state printing costs of policy manuals, we incorporated electronic signatures on forms. We saved the HR staff numerous hours each week printing and preparing policy manuals, going over all of the benefits with new employees and traveling time.

6. **What are the programs operational Costs?**

Now that the NEO has been operational for a few years the only cost is for updates to the system which amounts to about 40 hours a year and the cost of the software license.

7. **How is the program funded?**

The program requires no funding outside of the General funds.

8. **Did this program originate in your state?**

Online New Employee Orientations did not originate in our state, but our actual development of the modules and website are unique to Delaware.

9. **Are you aware of other programs in other states? If yes, how do they differ?**

We understand that Pennsylvania has an online New Employee Orientation, but it is not public facing like ours which is found on the home page of our Human Resource Website. What sets ours apart is that we have resources for Merit employees and our Casual Seasonal Employees. We also offer new hires the option(s) to either view the New Employee Orientation (1) by listening to the audio, (2) reading the information provided in the written narrative or (3) viewing the NEO by using both the narrative and audio options. By providing these alternative methods of viewing, the NEO addresses the need of new hires with certain audio/visual disabilities to more easily review the NEO. In addition, this also allows for all new hires to view the NEO based on their individual learning styles. We have everything they need to start their career and it also continues to serve as a

valuable resource throughout their career. From Benefit programs to Award programs to Training, it covers all their needs!

10. How do you measure success of this program?

We are able to measure the effectiveness of our NEO by surveying employees after they have completed the modules. The information is compiled quarterly and we have received good results and always look at their feedback for ways to improve the program.

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

In response to feedback from agency HR staff and suggestions from new employees we continue to look for ways to present the orientation material in the most user-friendly format as possible. One of the most significant changes that has been made to the orientation was the format. The orientation was initially presented as a "one-module" capture-all information format. We received a lot of feedback that it felt very cumbersome and overwhelming. In response to that, we divided the orientation into separate modules so that users could review the orientation one section at a time. This gave them the opportunity to review related subject matter, review it again at any time and then move on to another section. We received a lot of positive feedback to this change and made the orientation a more pleasant experience.

Our most recent updates were a direct result of loss of technical support for our learning management system. Once we found a new vendor, we converted our online orientation from one learning management software to another. This resulted in months of revamping the orientation to meet the requirements of the new software. Although very little change was made to the actual content, this change required significant modifications to the actual "behind the scenes" development of the orientation. This recently revised version was rolled out in February 2016.