

Government Finance, Administration, and Technology

Overview – Provide a brief, 25-word summary of your program or project.

The County of Santa Barbara's New Employee Welcome program is a year-long cohort system with three-touchpoints to increase employee engagement, development, and retention.

Challenge – Describe the challenge your county faced and the process used to address it. Explain the unique or critical factors that led to this project.

The County of Santa Barbara (COSB) is entering its fourth year of a multi-year transformational initiative known as Renew '22. One of the big picture goals of Renew '22 is to retain 80% of new employees during their first 5 years of County employment by June 2022. It was challenging to retain our employees within the first 18 months. Research shows that poor onboarding results in employees feeling disengaged and more likely to move on, so NEW was redesigned to enhance the employee experience and strengthen connection to the organization.

Solution – Describe the innovative steps taken by the county to solve the problem or overcome the challenge outlined above.

The New Employee Welcome Program (NEW) was created to increase retention and engagement our workforce, but it also helps them create a path for personal success and growth with the Santa Barbara County. Based on **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**, our program utilizes the **NEW Career Journey Workbook** to establish goals, and create an actionable path in which to achieve them. The NEW Program helps new hires create a personal vision of their careers with the county, encourages intentional growth, and instils a sense of belonging and comradery among new hires.

Innovation – Describe how this program is innovative among California Counties. Show how your solution demonstrates creativity, uniqueness, and an innovative spirit.

There are a couple of things that make our New Employee Welcome (NEW) a unique and innovative program. First, this three-touchpoint program has been designed based on **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs** that allow us to create a strong sense of belonging by ensuring we fulfil all of our employees needs. Second, as part of this one-year program, employees receive a **NEW Career Journey Workbook**. This is a innovative tool that has been designed to help our new hires to practice intentional growth, by creating a vision for their careers with the County of Santa Barbara, setting up their career goals and an action plan to achieve those goals. The program can also easily be customized for departments – we do one for the Sheriff's Department, for example, that is specific to their needs.

Results – Describe the results of the program/project. Discuss how the program or project has positively impacted the community, improved delivery of services to the public, or improved administration of a program internally.

In 2019, 205 employees participated in NEW, and we have 164 so far for 2020. One of the most valuable results of this program is the feedback we receive from employees. Because of some of the feedback, we were able to adjust such as streamlining onboarding and developing programs to increase engagement, diversity, and inclusion. The one-year celebration session helps us to see what people have accomplished over the year, such as passing probation, getting promoted, having babies, getting certifications and degrees, reaching career and personal milestones.

Replicability – Describe how your program can potentially be replicated by other California Counties. Can your program be promoted as a best practice that can be utilized by others?

The New Employee Welcome experience can be easily replicated at no additional cost and minimal time, if the infrastructure for a New Employee Orientation is in place. The attached document is based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and is easily customizable and can be tailored to meet each organization's needs.

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Project or Program Contact – List the name, title, mailing address, phone and email address of the person who can be contacted about this program.

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Optional Submission

Link to New Employee Welcome Workbook:

<https://cosantabarbara.box.com/s/2on8ycr4qxe9zqgu5588jjm2s0orqzuh>