Disability
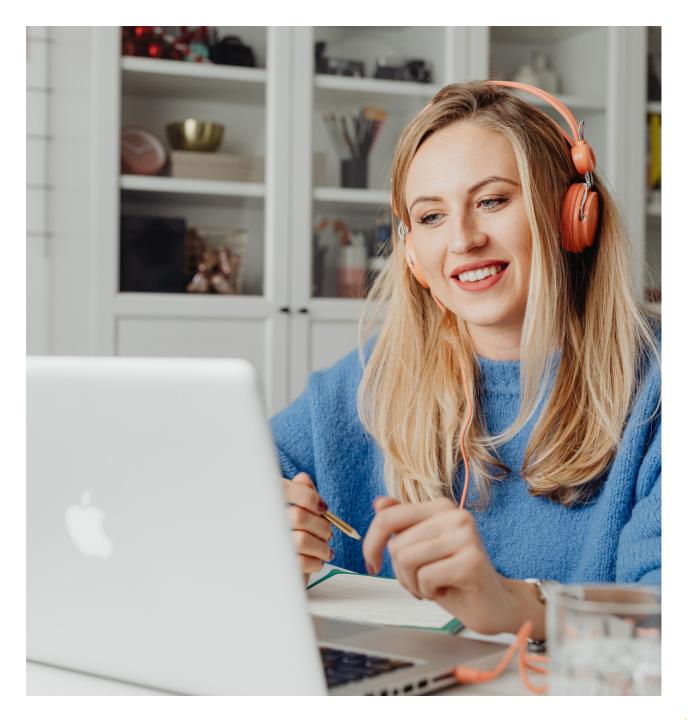**Confidence**

The Remote Onboarding Experience

CCRW | CCRT

Additional Supports for Remote Workers

Managers play an essential role in providing information about the workplace and available supports. This knowledge exchange is critical early in the onboarding process. The Inclusive Workplace has developed an easy to use and practical guide for managing a virtual team. In addition to this resource, here are some other important considerations for supporting new employees who are working from home: [4,5,6]

1. **Develop remote workplace policies and practices to enhance accessibility and inclusivity:**

- Send out a general framework or schedule for onboarding so that the new worker can be prepared for their first few days at work
- Share or develop a remote work policy that covers expected hours of work, expected response time, etc.
- Recognize the remote employee in the context of the "bigger picture" - they need to know how they are making an impact on the larger organization and/or their communities (e.g., through publications, staff meetings, social media posts, etc.)
- New workers may feel deterred from complaining to make a good impression, so integrate multiple, anonymous feedback opportunities to act on employees' suggestions

2. **Establish an accessible workspace at home:**

- Ensure that remote workers have the equipment they need to perform their jobs on the first day – essential items may include a laptop, monitor, mouse, and keyboard
- Understand that employees are not expected to front the costs necessary to set up a workspace at home – develop a budget for each remote worker for this purpose
- Provide tax claims for home office expenses
- Provide a list of what office supplies are eligible for coverage, and recommend pre-approved supplies or equipment that have been vetted for accessibility
- Offer to procure pre-approved supplies or equipment for the employee
- Consider provide employees with an ongoing stipend to use toward electricity, internet, phone, and supplies

3. **Ensure workers have the knowledge and the know-how to work safely from home:**

- Offer each new employee training for accessing key technology remotely (i.e., computer or technology literacy) – for example, host a video session with IT professionals to show workers how to use and navigate through the systems and software within your organization
- Provide training in diverse methods, such as self-paced, with support, a reference guide with screen shots or videos, etc.
- Consider offering training on workstation ergonomics and health and safety considerations at home
- Provide virtual workplace assessments so that employees feel confident about their workspace, have the opportunity to voice any questions about health and safety, and discuss the possibility of accommodations to support their participation

4. Recognize the added importance of communication in remote settings:

- Recognize that there may be an increased need for communication with remote onboarding
- Provide tools for remote employees that enable communication, such as Microsoft Teams or Slack for day-to-day chatting

- Ensure that any communication tools or technology are fully accessible. Learn more in Communication Tool 5 - Improving Your Online Accessibility
- Consider preparing materials specific to the remote work environment such as a manual for virtual etiquette in meetings. For more information, please visit Communication Tool 4 - Hosting Inclusive Virtual Meetings
- Where possible and when appropriate, host regular meetings to debrief and maintain a face-to-face communication
- Identify a dedicated onboarding liaison – someone who can answer questions and provide support for the new employee. If they are not able to answer a specific question, they can direct the new employee to someone who may be able to help them

5. Build an inclusive remote workplace culture:

- Consider sending the employee a welcome gift to make them feel a part of the company culture, even when they are working from home
- Foster quality relationships with employees and make time to regularly check on employees – this not only covers their experience in the workplace, but also their mental and physical health
- Launch a workplace mentorship program to provide support and coaching on the job
- Find ways for employees to familiarize themselves with one another and the company's culture, even if they might not be able to be in the same place at the same time
- It is easy for new employees to operate in silos when working remotely – create a series of formal and informal introductions, events, and spaces, across the organization aimed at fostering a sense of community and belongingness
- Ask employees for their feedback and ideas on how you can help them feel more welcome at your company