

COMPASS Foundations: HR Essentials for Hiring and Onboarding

Welcoming People with Dignity and Clarity
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Icebreaker: First Impressions Matter

Think of your first day at a new job.

In one word — how did it feel?

Type your word in the chat.



Mission-Aligned HR Framework

HIRING

- Who are we inviting into this work, and how do we reflect our values in that invitation?

ONBOARDING

- How do we welcome people in a way that reflects dignity and clarity?

These two questions form one continuous act of organizational integrity.



Why This Matters



- Hiring decisions shape who walks through the door — and who does not
- Values-aligned hiring is the first act of organizational integrity
- First impressions shape engagement and retention
- New staff decide how long they will stay within the first 90 days
- Onboarding reflects organizational culture — how you welcome someone communicates what you actually value
- Early experiences impact performance and commitment
- Clarity and connection in the first 30 days predict success at 90 days and beyond



Workshop Goals

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By the end of this training, participants will be able to:

- Design an equitable, values-aligned hiring process — from job description through panel interview and post-interview discussion — that reflects COMPASS program needs and community
- Apply best practices in onboarding from preboarding through the first 90 days
- Set clear expectations and goals for new hires using the 30-60-90 day framework
- Identify and address common onboarding challenges specific to COMPASS afterschool programs



Section 2: Hiring Module



Hiring Is a Values Act

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Every hiring decision communicates organizational values — whether you intend it to or not.

- In COMPASS programs, who you hire directly shapes the experience of the young people and families you serve
- The invitation begins before the interview
- The job description is the first signal to candidates about who you believe belongs in this work
- A misaligned hire does not just affect your program — it affects every young person that hire works with



The Job Description as a Values Document

The posting is not a task list. It is an invitation.

COMPASS Group Leader — What the Role Actually Requires:

- Must be at least 18 years old
- High School diploma or GED and 1 year of related experience in youth



Structured and Equitable Interviews

Unstructured Interview:

- Different questions for each candidate
- Based on intuition and impression
- Dominated by the most senior voice
- Comparison is difficult and biased
- Candidate has no space to assess the organization

Structured Interview:

- Same questions, same order, every candidate
- Scenario-based and values-grounded
- Panel scoring before group discussion
- Comparison is fair and evidence-based

Scenario-Based and Values-Aligned Questions

Sample interview questions for
COMPASS Group Leader positions:

Scenario: You are running an
afterschool activity and one of your
middle schoolers refuses to participate
and starts distracting the group. Walk
me through what you would do.





Who Should Be in the Room — and Why

Program Director:

- Sees organizational vision and program alignment
- Understands DYCD requirements and contract obligations
- Holds accountability for overall program quality

Frontline Staff or Peer:

- Brings peer perspective on culture and team dynamics
- Knows what the work actually feels like day to day
- Builds investment in the new hire's success

Site Coordinator or Lead:

- Understands operational realities
- Will directly supervise or work alongside new hire

Why staff participation matters:

Staff who participate in hiring feel invested in the new hire's success and are more likely to support onboarding. Inclusion in hiring is an engagement strategy, not just a fairness practice.

Panel guidelines: 2 to 3 people, shared rubric used by all, no single voice can override the group.



The Interviewer Scoring Tool

Each panelist scores independently before any group discussion begins.

Score each category 1 to 4:

- 1 = Does not meet expectations
- 2 = Developing
- 3 = Meets
- 4 = Exceeds

Category 1: Connection with Youth

Does this person demonstrate genuine relationship with young people?

Category 2: Scenario Response

How do they think and problem-solve under realistic conditions?

Category 3: Values Alignment

Do their answers reflect dignity, community, and mission?

Category 4: Something to Offer

Do they bring a talent, skill, or experience to enrich the program?

Category 5: Community Fit

Will they reflect and respect the community the program serves?

Category 6: Soft Skills

Do they have the ability to self-reflect?

Individual scoring before group discussion prevents anchoring — where the most senior voice shapes everyone else's assessment.

The Post-Interview Discussion

Where the hiring decision is made — and where bias most easily enters if the process is unstructured.

Step 1: Individual scores first

Each panelist shares their rubric scores and top observation before open discussion begins

Step 2: Name agreements

Where does the panel agree? What does alignment tell you about the candidate?

Step 3: Name differences

Where do scores differ? What does disagreement reveal about assumptions or bias?

Step 4: Decision by consensus

Reached through discussion — not by seniority overriding the group

The best hiring decisions come from structured reflection, not from whoever speaks first or most confidently after the candidate leaves the room.



Reflect: Hiring in Your Program

Take 90 seconds. Type your responses in the chat — hold until everyone is ready.

Question 1:

What is one element of your current COMPASS hiring process that reflects your values well?

Question 2:

What is one element you want to strengthen after today?



Quiz 1 – Question 1 of 3

A COMPASS program is posting a Group Leader position. The draft job description requires a bachelor's degree and three years of experience. The role is 20 hours per week at \$18–\$19/hour. What is the most values-aligned revision?

- A. Keep the bachelor's degree requirement to attract the strongest candidates
- B. Align requirements with the actual role: HS diploma or GED, 1 year of related experience, and demonstrated ability to connect with young people
- C. Remove all qualifications so more people can apply
- D. Add more requirements to justify the salary range

Correct Answer: B

Overstating qualifications for a part-time entry-level role creates inequity and reduces the applicant pool. The posting should reflect the actual role, not an aspirational one.



Quiz 1 – Question 2 of 3

Which BEST describes why having both a director and a frontline staff member on a COMPASS Group Leader interview panel leads to better hiring decisions?

- A. To make the process take longer and appear more thorough
- B. To give the director someone to agree with
- C. To bring organizational vision and peer perspective together, reduce individual bias, and give the candidate a realistic view of the team
- D. To satisfy a DYCD reporting requirement

Correct Answer: C

Staff who participate in hiring feel invested in the new hire's success. Panel diversity reduces bias and reflects organizational values.



Quiz 1 – Question 3 of 3

Which hiring practice BEST supports long-term staff success in COMPASS programs?

- A. Hiring quickly to fill the role before the school year starts
- B. Focusing only on whether the candidate has worked with youth before
- C. Aligning hiring decisions with organizational values, community fit, and role expectations
- D. Letting the program director decide informally after a single conversation

Correct Answer: C

Values-aligned, structured hiring reduces early turnover and increases the likelihood that new staff stay and thrive.



Section 3: Onboarding Essentials



The Evidence for Great Onboarding

- 86% of new hires decide how long they will stay with a company in the first six months
- Four in five workers say they would stay longer in a role with a better onboarding process
- 20% of employees quit within the first 45 days due to poor onboarding
- 82% of organizations with strong onboarding improve new hire retention
- 79% of employees say onboarding programs are key to understanding and adopting organizational culture
- Organizations with a standard onboarding process experience 50% greater new hire productivity
- Organizations with 90+ day programs see 31% higher new hire productivity (HR Effectiveness Report, 2025)



What Helps Talent Thrive

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Clarity: Clear role expectations, defined success measures, and structured feedback from day one

Connection: Relationships with colleagues, a buddy or mentor, and genuine belonging in the team

Confidence: Early wins, developmental feedback, and a supervisor who invests in growth

Culture: Understanding how the organization actually works — the values lived, not just stated

Support: Consistent check-ins, access to training, and knowing where to go when things are hard

Mission: Feeling connected to the purpose — why this work matters and how their role contributes



The 4 C's Framework

A thick, horizontal teal brushstroke that tapers at both ends, positioned directly beneath the title.

Four elements — all essential, none sufficient on its own.

Compliance: Policies explained clearly. Rules connected to real work. Employee understands what is required and why.

Clarification: Clear job expectations. Defined success measures. Employee knows what good performance looks like.

Culture: Mission, vision, values made real through behavior. Team norms explained. How things actually work here.

Connection: Mentor or buddy assigned. Relationship building supported. Employee feels part of the team and the mission.



The 4 C's — Levels of Maturity

Level 1: Compliance only

Paperwork completed, policies signed, basics covered

Level 2: Compliance + Clarification

Role expectations clear, success measures defined

Level 3: Compliance + Clarification + Culture

New hire understands how the organization really works, feels grounded in mission

Level 4: All Four C's

New hire has clarity, connection, confidence, and cultural belonging — this is where retention happens



Reflection: Your Onboarding Experience

Think of a time you started a new role.

Question 1:

What was one thing your organization did well that helped you feel supported and ready?

Question 2:

What was one thing that was missing — that would have made your first 90 days easier or more connected?



The Onboarding Journey

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Onboarding is not an event — it is an experience that unfolds across the first year.

Stage 1: Preboarding — Before Day One

Early communication, paperwork and IT setup, workspace preparation, welcome before day one

Stage 2: Orientation — Days 1 to 7

First-day checklist, role overview, policy walk-through, team introductions, first check-in scheduled

Stage 3: Integration — Days 8 to 30

Role clarity deepened, 30-day goal setting, early wins supported, check-in with supervisor

Stage 4: Growth — Days 31 to 90

60-day review, benefits enrollment (Day 75), performance conversation, alignment on goals



Connection and Culture

A horizontal teal brushstroke underline is located directly beneath the title.

- Assign a buddy or mentor from day one — someone who knows how things really work
- Create intentional opportunities for the new hire to meet team members
- Name the unwritten rules explicitly: how decisions get made, how conflict is handled, what success looks like here
- Help new staff see the mission in action — not just in a handbook
- Connect them to the young people and the community early

Belonging is built intentionally. It does not happen by accident, and it cannot be replaced by paperwork.



Ongoing Support After 90 Days

Onboarding transitions into development — the investment continues.

- Regular, structured performance reviews and support conversations
- Individual growth plan co-created with the staff member
- Continued access to training tied to role, population, and program goals
- Employee pulse surveys and regular check-ins to understand how staff are doing

Thoughts?

What does ongoing support currently look like in your COMPASS program?



Common Onboarding Problems

Name what you recognize. These are failures of systems, not of people.

- Outdated job description that did not reflect the actual role or community
- Outdated policy and procedure manual that staff signed but no one explained
- Overwhelming first day with no structure, schedule, or clear expectations
- No check-in or feedback mechanism throughout the onboarding process
- Inconsistent onboarding experience — varies by supervisor or department
- One size does not fit all — ignoring cultural, linguistic, and generational differences

Reflect: What is one gap you recognize in your COMPASS program's onboarding process right now?



Section 4: Tools for Success

Tools for Success



Tool 1: Pre-boarding Checklist

- Everything that should happen between the offer acceptance and Day 1
- Communication, IT, workspace, welcome, and supervisor preparation

Tool 2: First-Day Onboarding Checklist

- A structured guide for the new hire's first day
- Arrival, workspace, team introduction, policy walk-through, first check-in scheduled

Tool 3: 30-60-90 Day Plan

- A framework for supporting the new hire across three phases: learning, contributing, and aligning
- Includes check-in moments and the Day 75 benefits enrollment deadline

Chat prompt: Which of these does your program currently use consistently?



Critical Legal Touchpoints in the First 90 Days

Day 75 — Benefits Enrollment Deadline:

- Benefits typically activate at Day 90
- Enrollment paperwork must be given to the new hire by Day 75
- Missing this window may mean the employee loses benefits access for the entire plan year
- Build Day 75 into the 30-60-90 calendar as a required HR touchpoint — not optional

Day 90 — At-Will Employment Window:

- At-will means either party can end employment at any time
- In practice, performance concerns are much harder to act on after Day 90
- Any concern must be named, documented, and addressed before Day 90
- Waiting until Day 91 significantly increases legal and operational risk

This is both a care practice and a legal practice. Addressing concerns early protects the employee, the program, and the organization.



Whiteboard Activity: Build Your 30–60–90 Onboarding Snapshot

For a Group Leader role in your COMPASS program — what goes in each phase?

Days 1 to 30: Learn

Goal: _____

Check-in moment: _____

Support action: _____

Days 31 to 60: Contribute

Goal: _____

Check-in moment: _____

Support action: _____

Days 61 to 90: Align

Goal: _____

Check-in moment: _____

Support action: Include Day 75 benefits deadline _____

Add one idea per column. Screenshot and share in chat.



Quiz 2 – Question 1 of 4

A new Group Leader says: "I'm not sure what success looks like in my role."
What is the BEST response?

- A. Direct them to the policy manual
- B. Clearly define expectations, priorities, and success measures with them directly
- C. Assign more tasks so they stay busy and engaged
- D. Wait until the 90-day review to address expectations

Correct Answer: B

Role clarity is the responsibility of the supervisor from day one, not something a new hire should figure out alone.



Quiz 2 – Question 2 of 4

A horizontal teal brushstroke underline.

Which of the following is the MOST effective onboarding approach for a staff?

- A. Focus only on first-day orientation — it is a one-time event
- B. Provide all information during week one so the new hire is not overwhelmed later
- C. Design onboarding from preboarding through the first 90 days with structured check-ins
- D. Let staff figure things out independently — that builds resilience

Correct Answer: C

Effective onboarding unfolds across 90 days with structured support at each phase, not a single orientation event.



Quiz 2 – Question 3 of 4

Benefits paperwork for a new staff must be completed by which day to ensure benefits activate on time?

- A. Day 30
- B. Day 60
- C. Day 75
- D. Day 90

Correct Answer: C

Benefits typically activate at Day 90. Day 75 is the deadline for enrollment paperwork. Missing it can cost the employee their benefits for the full plan year.



Quiz 2 – Question 4 of 4

A new Group Leader has the skills to do the job but seems disengaged by week four. What is the MOST likely issue?

- A. Lack of technical ability — they need more training
- B. Too much onboarding — they are overwhelmed by information
- C. Lack of clarity and connection — they do not feel supported or sure of their role
- D. Too many meetings — they need more independent time

Correct Answer: C

Early disengagement is almost always about clarity and connection, not ability. The solution is structure and relationship, not more tasks.



Section 5: COMPASS Case Study



Case Study: Pathways Afterschool — When Hiring and Onboarding Fall Short

Pathways is a COMPASS SONYC program in the South Bronx serving 120 young people in grades 6 to 8.

Hiring: A Group Leader vacancy opened after a sudden departure. Under pressure to staff before fall, the director conducted a single informal interview alone. Marcus was selected because he seemed like a good fit. No structured questions, no panel, no scoring rubric.

Pre-boarding: Marcus received one email two days before his start date with an address and a time. No welcome message. No schedule. No contact from the director.

Day One: The team was warm but Marcus had no workspace, IT access was delayed, and he signed eleven documents in his first hour with no explanation.

Day 30: No 30-day review. Marcus is struggling with a participant who escalates regularly. He handles it differently than the team and does not know the behavior support protocol.



Case Study: Discussion

Individual reflection in chat, then full group discussion. 7 minutes total.

Question 1:

Using the hiring anchor question — who are we inviting into this work and how do we reflect our values — where did Pathways fail Marcus before he ever walked through the door? What would a values-aligned hiring process have looked like?

Question 2:

Using the 4 C's and the onboarding journey, identify the two most critical failures in Marcus's experience. What tool from today would have addressed each one?

Question 3:

It is now Day 75 and Marcus has not received his benefits enrollment paperwork. What does HR need to do right now — and what does this tell us about the program's 30-60-90 plan?



Case Study: What Should Have Happened

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Hiring: Panel interview with director and frontline staff. Scenario-based questions. Individual scoring before group discussion. Values alignment confirmed.

Pre-boarding: Welcome message within 24 hours. Pre-boarding checklist completed. Supervisor reaches out personally. Workspace and IT ready before Day 1.

Day One: First-day checklist followed. Policies explained as conversations. Week schedule shared. End-of-day check-in with supervisor.

Day 30: 30-day review completed. Role expectations and success measures confirmed. Behavior support protocol explained and modeled.

Day 75: Benefits enrollment paperwork given and explained. Deadline confirmed. Completion verified by HR before Day 90.

Every failure in Marcus's story is addressed by a tool or practice introduced today.



Section 6: Closing Tools and Commitment





Two Tools You Are Completing Right Now

Tool 1: Hiring and Onboarding Self-Assessment + Priority List

- Rate your current practice across 10 areas on a 1 to 4 scale
- Name one strength and one gap per section
- Identify your top three priorities ranked by urgency and impact

Areas:

Job Description · Interview Structure · Panel Inclusion · Scoring and Discussion · Pre-boarding · Orientation · Role Clarity · Connection and Culture · 30-60-90 Planning · Legal Touchpoints

Tool 2: Monday Morning Action List

- A practical checklist organized in three time horizons - 30-60-90
- Pre-populated from today's content — check what applies, add your own

Time Horizons:

This Week (immediate, low-lift)

This Month (requires planning)

Next 90 Days (systemic, requires coordination)

These are not homework — they are the work. 5 minutes of individual completion before breakout groups.

Breakout Groups: Share Your Priorities

Groups of 3 to 4 · 10 minutes · Full group share-back: 1 theme per group, 3 minutes total

Breakout prompt:

Share your top priority from the self-assessment and one action from your Monday list. Listen for what you have in common. What does the pattern across your group tell you about where COMPASS programs are in this work right now?

Step 1: Each person shares their top self-assessment priority (1 minute each)

Step 2: Each person names one Monday action they are committing to (30 seconds each)

Step 3: Group identifies what you have in common and what you can learn from each other (2 minutes)



Final Reflection

A thick, horizontal teal brushstroke that tapers at both ends, positioned directly beneath the title.

+ One thing I will start

↻ One thing I will change

↑ One thing I will strengthen



Brienne Colston and Yvette Feinberg

DYCD COMPASS Foundations

Welcoming people with dignity and clarity is an ongoing experience, not a single event.

The invitation begins with the job description.

The welcome begins before day one. The commitment continues through year one and beyond.

Survey and Questions

Please complete our survey!

The survey link has been shared in the chat. It takes less than 3 minutes.

Questions?

Thank you for the work you do for young people every day.

