

Supervisor Onboarding & Training: Overview

This document provides context for the “Supervisor Onboarding and Training” presentation to explain its purpose, development process, target audience, key topics, and recommended use.

Purpose: The “Supervisor Onboarding & Training” presentation is an example of a cohesive package of training material for onboarding new supervisors at an employment social enterprise.

In REDF’s experience, many social enterprises have questions about how to properly train and prepare their supervisors. The frontline supervisor is a critical and nuanced role, overseeing operations on the ground, providing technical expertise and customer service, while also coaching, developing, and supporting workers overcoming barriers to employment. For new supervisors, the transition can be very challenging. In response, REDF has developed a supervisor training resource that incorporates best practices for employment social enterprises.

Development process: REDF partnered with Chrysalis, a former REDF Portfolio member and nonprofit in Southern California dedicated to serving individuals who are navigating barriers to the workforce to find and retain employment. Established in 1991, Chrysalis Enterprises operates four business lines (street maintenance, freeway maintenance, housekeeping, staffing) and has extensive experience and know-how in training frontline supervisors. Together, REDF and Chrysalis worked to codify the enterprise’s practices and learnings into a cohesive package for onboarding and training new supervisors.

Target audience: Employment social enterprises seeking guidance and materials for training frontline supervisors and equipping them with tools and techniques to be successful

Key topics: While this presentation is an example from a social enterprise in the maintenance services industry, the training topics covered are applicable across all sectors:

- The supervisor role (fit within larger organization, new perspective as staff member, demonstrating core values, modeling, coaching)
- Essential soft skills (emotional intelligence, trauma-informed care, de-escalation, delivering feedback, self-care)
- Leadership development skills (leadership styles and behaviors, team building, assertiveness, building trust, responding to high-stress situations, common challenges)
- Supervisor responsibilities and expectations (team leadership, customer relations, operations, health and safety, communication, documentation)
- Technology and communication (e.g., using tablets, sending an out-of-office email)

Recommended use: Social enterprises may adapt and customize this presentation for use in onboarding new supervisors. Some will need to right-size the training for their own enterprise’s size and context (keep in mind: Chrysalis is large and well-established). The training is structured into modules so there is flexibility in how and when to offer it (e.g., a few sections at a time over 1-2 weeks). This represents the first step in training new supervisors, ideally with additional training elements to follow, such as:

- Supervisor handbook / manual
- On-the-job training / support / mentorship / shadowing
- Training materials specific to a business line or contract (e.g., equipment guides, maps, contract instructions)
- One-on-one check-ins with direct manager
- Advanced trainings for experienced supervisors
- Ongoing professional development / continuing education