Use the following questions to develop an understanding of your unit’s culture.

| **Ask self and/or mentor** | **Ask other leaders** | **Ask managers and/or key stakeholders** | **Ask direct reports** | **Ask others to access information about available resources** |
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| What is the current vision and mission of the unit?  | What are the three things we should be very proud of as an organization and why? | Who are our main stakeholders, customers, clients, etc.?  | What is a recent management decision you did not understand?  | How can I help others advance in the organization? |
| How are my goals and objectives tied to the vision?  | What are the unspoken norms?  | Why do customers do business with us?  | What does the leadership team do that gets in the way of you doing your job? | How do I request training? |
| What is the state of the talent within my group? | How is personal success measured?  | What do our customers need from us now? | How do you feel at the state of the workweek? | How does one register for training? |
| What are the organizational norms regarding dress and appearance? | How do you encourage others to communicate the core values? | What will our customers need from us in the future? | How do you feel at the end of the work week? | Which organizations provide professional development opportunities? |
| What are the organization norms regarding punctuality? | How do you help a new employee understand the culture of the organization? | What gets in the way of us doing our job? | What are the key metrics to track progress and success? | With whom should I discuss development opportunities? |
| What is the process for requesting and documenting time off?  | When faced with two equally qualified candidates how do you determine who to hire? | What are the expectations for my role as a leader? | What are the short-term priorities? | How do I find out about required training? |
| Are there any quick wins? | How do I locate information about other departments and offices? | How is departmental success measured? | What tools are used to manage calendars (personal or departmental)? | How can I access available leadership training resources? |
| What support do I need to achieve success for my organization? | What is one mistake you witness leaders making more frequently than others? | What are the organizational taboos? | What is my role in emergency response? | Where can I find recommended reading material? |
| Where can I go to find the most recent employee satisfaction (or other) results for my organization? | What is the one behavior or trait you have seen derail more leaders' careers? | What are some of the challenges that previous incumbents in this position have encountered?  | Where is the alternate operation location and expectations? | When and where are the welcome, orientation activities? |
| What is my role as a colleague? | Why do people stay in this organization? | Where can I find information about the current administration's priorities? | What process is used to collect our customers' needs and measure their satisfaction? | Are there any organizational leadership tools or resources I should be aware of? |
| What strategic relationships and internal networks should I be aware of? | What motivates senior management? | What key policies should I be aware of in the first month and which ones do I own? | What are the short-term priorities for the organization and my offices? | What are a few resources you would recommend to someone looking to gain insight into becoming a better leader? |
| What do I want to be remembered for? | What are the organizational norms about travel? | Who are my key partners and what do they do/provide? | What are the results of the most recent external and/or internal review? | What are you doing to ensure you continue to learn and grow as a leader? |
| What are the major risks associated with my position—to me, to my organization? | In my first twelve months, what can I do to help you and your staff be successful? | What are the results of the most recent employee survey? | What are three capabilities we have that are underdeveloped or underutilized and what should we do about that? | What are the leadership competencies of this organization? |
| How does the work I do contribute to the overall success of the organization? | Who are the "power players"? | What is the current and future year budget outlook? | What are the three things you would change around here and why? | What skills do I need to be most effective? |
| What is the organization’s commitment to work-life, flextime, etc.? | What is one thing you would change about the organization? | What is the process for budgeting and finance at the senior level? | What is the most pressing issue for me to address with our customers? | When should I complete my Development Plan? |

*Unless otherwise noted this work is adapted from: Hit the ground running: Establishing a model onboarding program — United States Office of Personnel Management, Washington, D.C. October 2011.*