



PLANNING FOR OPEN ENROLLMENT

Open enrollment can be an extremely positive and rewarding experience for you and your employees, providing you plan for it well in advance. During this unprecedented time, it's important to review and modify your benefits offerings to enhance your employees' physical, mental and financial health.

Use this general checklist to help your organization prepare for a successful open enrollment period, from early planning to follow-up.

8-12 Weeks Before Open Enrollment

Maintain records of employee questions, comments and concerns.

Survey employees on what they are seeking for offerings or improvements.

Identify enrollment needs to introduce or revamp. Make note of what's new and exciting so it can be highlighted later with employees.

Begin developing the benefits guide.

Consider online enrollment programs and software.

Develop online educational materials such as FAQs, videos, calculators, and downloadable documents or forms.

4 Weeks Before Open Enrollment

Begin publishing enrollment content, using online enrollment programs and software.

Develop a toolkit for managers (including talking points and FAQs).

Add an open enrollment reminder to the email signatures of management.

1-2 Weeks Before Open Enrollment

Host virtual benefits meetings, webinar events and one-on-one meetings, as needed.

Send pamphlets, brochures or other mailers to employees.

Anticipate FAQs, and craft succinct answers.

During Open Enrollment

Make sure employees receive all of the following materials:

- Open enrollment schedule
- Statement of current coverage
- Plan-specific changes and rates
- Plan-specific summaries
- Open enrollment booklet and forms
- Deadline for open enrollment
- Carrier contact information



Remind managers to talk with their teams.



Offer generous deadlines, with frequent reminders.



Remain available through various mediums for employees to contact with questions and clarification.



Schedule a companywide reminder for the day before the enrollment deadline.



1-2 Weeks After Open Enrollment

Check enrollment forms for any missing information.



Check enrollment forms for any information that was incorrectly filled out.



Submit all enrollment forms to the carrier.



Ensure that you follow any health care reform provisions that affect your plan and employees.



Follow up to ensure all employees received their ID cards.



Make sure all employees are clear about their benefits and don't have any outstanding questions.



Additionally, consider offering a second off-cycle enrollment period for employees. Feature voluntary benefits that may be overshadowed by medical benefits and retirement options if offered during the typical open enrollment season. This second enrollment time will provide employees the opportunity to focus on other benefits offerings separate from the hectic primary open enrollment season.

For more information about open enrollment, contact Woodruff Sawyer.

This checklist is merely a guideline. It is neither meant to be exhaustive nor meant to be construed as legal advice. It does not address all potential compliance issues with federal, state or local standards. Consult your licensed representative at Woodruff Sawyer or legal counsel to address possible compliance requirements.
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