

CHECKLIST

Employee Benefits Planning Checklist

A step-by-step checklist for building, choosing, and rolling out employee benefits.

Before You Start Shopping

- Know your headcount and full-time equivalent count — this determines which plan types and tax credits you're even eligible for
- Set a per-employee budget: what you can contribute monthly, not just what you'd like to
- Ask employees what they actually use — a quick survey on doctors, prescriptions, and priorities beats guessing
- Decide your renewal timeline and start shopping 60–90 days ahead of it

Choosing Core Coverage

- Compare at least two carriers, not just a renewal quote from your current one
- Check whether employees' current doctors and specialists are in-network for each option
- Review the prescription drug formulary against what your team is actually taking
- Decide between a lower-premium/higher-deductible plan (often paired with an HSA) and a higher-premium/lower-deductible plan
- Confirm whether dependents and domestic partners are eligible, and at what cost

Beyond Health Insurance

- Dental and vision — often inexpensive to add and highly valued by employees
- Life and disability insurance — short-term and long-term disability, and basic group life
- Retirement contributions — even a modest 401(k) match is a major recruiting and retention tool
- Voluntary benefits — accident, critical illness, or pet insurance employees can opt into and pay for themselves

Compliance and Paperwork

- Confirm ACA reporting requirements that apply to your size (Forms 1094-C / 1095-C for applicable large employers)
- Distribute a Summary of Benefits and Coverage (SBC) for each plan offered
- Check state continuation and COBRA notice requirements
- Keep signed enrollment and waiver forms on file for every employee

Rolling It Out

- Hold a benefits meeting or webinar before open enrollment opens — don't just email a PDF
- Give employees a clear enrollment deadline and what happens if they miss it
- Provide a single point of contact for benefits questions
- Revisit the whole plan annually — renewal season is the right time to shop, not just accept