



2024 Year-End HR Checklist

Finish the year with confidence and start 2025 strong

As year-end approaches, HR, payroll and benefits professionals often face one of their busiest times, juggling compliance deadlines, reporting and plans for the new year. This checklist can help you stay organized, reduce stress and set your team up for a successful start in the coming year.

Get a Head Start on Year-End

Starting early makes a world of difference when wrapping up the year smoothly.

Stay on Top of Compliance: Keep an eye on new tax laws, labor regulations or compliance updates. Regular monitoring helps you avoid last-minute adjustments.

Plan Out Key Deadlines: Identify essential payroll, benefits and tax filing deadlines. Share these dates with your team, set automated reminders and assign tasks so everything stays on track.

Verify Employee Data: Ensure employee records—addresses, Social Security numbers and tax info—are up-to-date and accurate.

Start W-2 and 1099 Prep Early: Get a head start on preparing these forms to meet the Jan. 31 deadline without any last minute scramble.

Reconcile Payroll Taxes: Carefully review payroll and tax data for discrepancies so your year-end reports are accurate and ready to submit.

Tip:

Start your year-end planning in Q3. Set internal deadlines, assign responsibilities and check-in with your team regularly to avoid year-end bottlenecks.

Wrap-Up Benefits and Enrollment

Communicate Enrollment Details Early: Send clear benefits updates and deadlines well ahead of time to streamline enrollment and reduce questions.

Double-Check Benefits Selections: Ensure employee elections are updated accurately in your systems and shared with providers. A quick audit now helps prevent issues in January.

Review Benefits Usage and Costs: Look at usage and trends to manage costs effectively and align benefits with employee needs.

Tip:

Begin planning for open enrollment at least three months out. Meet with providers, prepare materials and ensure your team can handle questions.

Finalize Performance and Compensation

Complete Year-End Reviews: Document feedback, assess goals and set new objectives with employees to wrap-up the year and keep employees motivated.

Process Bonuses and Adjustments: Finalize bonuses or salary adjustments and confirm they're reflected in payroll for compliance and budgeting.

Evaluate Paid Time Off Balance: Decide on policies for unused vacation time—whether to pay out, roll over or reset balances for the new year.

Conduct a Wage Transparency Review: Review current pay levels to ensure they're fair, competitive and aligned with new wage transparency laws.

Tip:

Encourage employees to complete self-assessments early. This gives managers valuable insights, making performance reviews more effective and efficient.

Kick-Off the New Year Right

A well-organized January sets the tone for a seamless year.

Distribute W-2s and 1099s: Ensure forms are sent to employees and contractors by Jan. 31, and electronic filings meet IRS deadlines.

Confirm Employee Classifications: Verify that employee classifications (e.g., exempt vs. non-exempt, part-time vs. full-time) are accurate to stay compliant and reduce legal risk.

Complete Affordable Care Act (ACA) Reporting: Distribute 1095-C forms for employee health coverage if required.

Tip:

Block time in January for tasks like W-2 distribution and ACA reporting to ensure they're prioritized and completed on time.

Update Policies and Employee Handbook

Update the Employee Handbook: Ensure policies reflect regulatory and organizational updates, keeping everything clear for employees.

Communicate Policy Changes: Meet with teams to review updates, answer questions, and ensure they understand and support the changes.

Plan Your 2025 Training Calendar: Schedule compliance, leadership and skills development training for the year to support growth and meet strategic goals.

Tip:

Use a standardized template to quickly access which policies need updates annually, saving time while keeping your handbook consistent.

Maintain Compliance and Reporting

File Payroll Tax Reports: Submit quarterly federal and state payroll tax returns, including Form 941. The due dates are on the last day of the month following each quarter.

Handle ACA Reporting (if applicable): File all ACA forms, such as 1094-C, on time to avoid penalties. The deadlines are generally Feb. 28 for paper filings and March 31 for electronic filing.

Tip:

Schedule quarterly compliance audits to check employee classifications, payroll records and benefits data. Staying proactive prevents year-end surprises.

Engage Your Team and Set Goals for 2025

Celebrate Employee Contributions: Acknowledge key achievements and celebrate milestones to boost morale as you close out the year.

Gather Feedback on Employee Experience: Use surveys or informal check-ins to get a sense of employee satisfaction and help guide your 2025 planning.

Outline Your 2025 HR Plan: Set clear priorities for talent development, workforce planning and engagement to align with business goals.

Tip:

Hold a strategy workshop with managers and stakeholders to refine priorities and align HR's goals with broader organizational objectives.

Keep Your HR Team on Track All Year Long

Consistent, year-round practices can help you ease the pressure at the end of the year and keep everything on track.

Monitor Compliance Regularly: Stay on top of labor laws, tax regulations and other requirements to avoid surprises at year-end.

Keep Employee Records Updated: Maintain up-to-date employee records, including status changes and benefits, so you're always prepared.

Maintain Open Communication: Keep employees informed with regular updates on compliance, benefits and any new HR policies.

Reinforce HR's Value: Use feedback and clear communication to showcase HR's role in driving goals and fostering engagement.

Tip:

Schedule quarterly "HR Health Check" meetings to review compliance, employee records and workflows. This proactive approach keeps your team prepared and aligned with strategic goals.

Quick Reminder

Tasks and deadlines may look a little different for each organization based on the services you provide and local regulations. Every HR team has its year-end planning process, so feel free to adapt this checklist to fit your specific timing and priorities.

Make Year-End Easier

Discover how **isolved HR Services** simplifies year-end tasks, letting your team focus on big goals for a stronger start to the new year.

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