

BA Profile: Hina Ali Benefits Administrator Harmony Public Schools



Starting this year, ahead of TRS ActiveCare Annual Enrollment we'd like to take a moment to recognize hard-working Benefits Administrators and give them a chance to share their [best practices](#) with you! As the main point of contacts of all employees for all benefits-related information, the work BAs do is so valuable not only to employees, but to Aetna and TRS as well.

Read on to learn more about Hina Ali, the Benefits Administrator for Harmony Public Schools, a statewide public charter school system with 3,900 employees across Texas. Here, she shares her tips for a successful annual enrollment and all the ways she excels in her work.

How would you describe your duties as a BA during annual enrollment?

Being in this position, I believe that it is important to put employees' concerns first. If I were in their shoes I would want to know that I'm taken care of, so I try to look at things with a people-first mindset. I give annual trainings for campus administrators and at our annual Harmony Public Schools leadership summit held each summer. Employees also reach out to me directly with their needs so I try to learn what's important to them and deliver information in the most impactful way. I also brainstorm every day on how I can simplify things. Once I have all of the information I need, I am able to create trainings, packets, videos, and checklists. Something new I've created is how to understand your benefits as they appear on the paycheck stub. It's been a huge success so far – employees feel that they are being educated and valued so it has made a difference. Everyone on my team feels it is their duty to provide the best service possible.

Do you have any tips for handling new hires?

It's my job to set up our HR Specialists for success. During onboarding there is a new hire checklist, and we also have an electronic package for new employees so every detail they would need is accounted for. If any questions come back regarding benefits I can answer them on a personal basis.

How do you manage working with the annual enrollment deadline?

Prioritizing tasks helps a lot and with experience comes knowing which issues are most urgent or take the most time. When I can I try to plan my day ahead of time. For me, the high priority tasks are answering emails, submitting enrollments, and returning phone calls. Our policy is that emails have to be answered within 48 hours so I start there. I take lots of notes as I go. I also find it important to keep a positive and calm demeanor, and remind myself to stay hydrated!

What advice would you share with a new BA?

Have a positive attitude, prioritize, sort out your tasks, and try to see things from the employee's point of view. Brainstorm every day to simplify things. Being a Benefits Administrator is a detail-oriented job, so don't be afraid to dig into the details to analyze and resolve issues. It will help you in the long run. Always strive to do better. Be kind and empathetic!

Thank you for taking the time to talk to us, Hina, and for all that you do! Stay tuned for more stories from other BAs in the coming weeks.