



Six Key HR Questions to Ask When Managing a Multistate Workforce

Help your business
navigate the complications—
and reap the benefits

A geographically distributed workforce can be a win-win for your organization.

Employers can access a more diverse talent pool and, in some cases, reduce office overhead. Employees can live and work in settings of their choice and reduce or eliminate commutes.

But managing a distributed workforce that spans multiple states also presents challenges—and even risks.

Asking yourself these six key HR questions will help set the foundation for a healthy distributed workforce structure that benefits your employees and strengthens your business.

1. WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO FOSTER COMPANY CULTURE WITH A MULTISTATE WORKFORCE?

One of the first questions organizations should consider when working with a distributed workforce is how to build company culture, regardless of work location.

Geographic distribution does not mean you have to sacrifice culture. If your company stays grounded in its core values and mission, your culture can thrive, but your tactics for promoting it have to adjust to your workforce.

Get creative so all employees—especially those working remotely—understand and embrace your organization's culture.

- **Reflect your culture in your recruiting** and onboarding processes, including your job postings.
- **Hold town halls** featuring your senior leadership to emphasize your company's mission, vision and values.
- **Encourage managers to build connections** by embedding routines and rituals into the work week, such as regular team meetings.
- **Leverage your intranet** or company wide emails to communicate company news and updates.
- **Get creative with company swag** to reinforce and reward the demonstration of your culture and values.
- **Build in time during meetings to allow team members to socialize** and encourage everyone to turn their cameras on to get valuable face time.
- **Actively acknowledge employee achievements** aligned with your culture.
- **Encourage the use of internal messaging systems** to build relationships and collaboration.
- **Plan voluntary company activities** aligned with your culture that engage office and remote workers, like fitness or virtual trivia challenges.



2. HOW CAN WE ALIGN GOALS AND SET KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs) WITH EMPLOYEES ACROSS SETTINGS?

When employees are spread across multiple locations, an intentional approach to goals and KPIs is essential. Consider how you can use common touchpoints to keep your team focused.

- **Remember that it starts at the top.** Executive leadership sets the tone so that departmental goals align with organizational goals.
- **Make your organizational goals and KPIs visible** by posting them on your intranet, meeting agendas and reports.
- **Conduct regularly scheduled huddles** to check in with employees, including remote workers, on their progress toward goals and KPIs and to help them overcome any roadblocks.
- **Incorporate your organizational goals** and company values into employee review metrics.
- **Design mentorship programs** to provide development opportunities—as well as connections—aligned with your organizational goals.
- **Pay attention to work-life integration.** For many companies, the work dynamic has changed over the past few years and people are still adjusting. Provide and encourage employees to take appropriate time off so they can perform their best and hit their goals.

“Consider how you will integrate multistate compliance into your HR workflow.”



3. HOW CAN WE COMPLY WITH HR-RELATED REQUIREMENTS THAT VARY FROM REGION TO REGION AND STATE TO STATE?

The challenges of HR compliance grow when you have a distributed workforce. If one of your employees moves, you are responsible to confirm your policies and practices align with the requirements in their new location. Do you have a strategy for complying with those laws and regulations and staying up to date?

Consider how you will integrate multistate compliance into your HR workflow. Requirements to check include:

- Paid sick and safe leave and paid leave that can be taken for any reason
- Paid family and medical leave programs and other protected leaves of absence
- “Ban-the-box” regulations restricting inquiries regarding criminal records on job applications
- Salary history inquiry bans
- Additional protected classes under anti-discrimination laws
- Broad anti-harassment protections, including training and notice
- Final pay, including what must be paid and timing of payment
- Minimum wage differences and potential impact on the salary threshold
- Expanded overtime and double time eligibility
- Meal and rest breaks, lactation breaks and accommodations
- New hire forms and pamphlets
- Compliance posters and Wage Theft Prevention Act notices
- State WARN Acts for mass layoffs, furloughs or permanent office closures
- Payroll tax registration and filings
- Compensation range transparency in job postings



4. HOW WILL WE MANAGE COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS WHEN REQUIREMENTS VARY FROM REGION TO REGION AND STATE TO STATE?

The laws and regulations for compensation and benefits can be extremely complicated to navigate. It is crucial to develop a strategy for managing the different requirements.

Factor the following into your consideration.

- **Equal pay laws** generally prohibit an employer from paying different wages based on sex (or other protected classes) for the same or similar work, effort and responsibility.
- **Wage transparency laws** are becoming more common and vary by region. Some of the laws require companies to disclose pay ranges to both applicants and employees. Other such laws apply broadly to any job position that could be performed in a particular state or locality, such as remote jobs.
- **Payroll taxes and withholdings** vary based on state and local requirements. You will need to correctly determine whether to withhold income tax for the employee's state, the employer's state or both.
- **Health benefits** can be tricky too. Health insurers and networks often vary by geographic region, so it's essential to have the right carriers, plans and networks everywhere your employees are based.
- **Business expense reimbursement requirements**, such as for mobile phones and internet, can vary for those working in different locations.
- **Employee exempt/non-exempt status and minimum wage requirements** can also vary by location.





5. WHAT IS OUR STRATEGY TO RECRUIT A DIVERSE WORKFORCE AND CREATE AN INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT FOR EMPLOYEES REGARDLESS OF WHERE THEY ARE BASED?

Many employers are developing and implementing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives to facilitate a sense of belonging for everyone in the workplace. A distributed workforce can help your DEI efforts by providing access to a broader and more diverse talent pool—but only if you can successfully attract and retain diverse talent.

Pay attention to the following:

- **How and where will you recruit new hires?** Think outside of your job posting. Connect with schools and associations that can give you access to underrepresented talent. Make the opportunities at your company clear and be prepared to share specific examples, like case studies or employee testimonials of what you've done to create an inclusive workplace culture.
- **Is it clear that you are an organization of belonging?** Consider auditing your recruiting, training and marketing materials to be sure they convey your commitment to DEI and reflect your culture. Make sure your DEI initiatives are in writing, broadly distributed to the workforce and include ongoing education and training about DEI.

Another important note: If you are a federal contractor, stay aware of potential changes that could obligate you to demonstrate that you have DEI initiatives in place.

6. DO WE HAVE A PLAN FOR KEEPING EMPLOYEES SAFE IN THEIR WORK ENVIRONMENTS, INCLUDING THE ABILITY TO OBTAIN PROPER WORKERS' COMPENSATION COVERAGE FOR EACH LOCATION?

Employers everywhere are required to take specific steps to safeguard their employees' physical and mental wellbeing in the workplace.

- **Employee safety efforts begin with designing the physical workplace and creating a culture that helps protect employees' health.** Businesses must understand regional and state safety mandates and work with their employees on injury and illness prevention.
- **Explore wellness benefits** such as gym memberships, smoking cessation programs or an employee assistance program to help promote healthy behaviors.
- **Workers' compensation coverage** requirements can vary from place to place and even employees working from home must be covered, so employees must understand what a reportable injury is.
- **Keep in mind location specific employee safety requirements**, such as heat and smoke laws and emergency condition laws that allow employees to refuse to report to a worksite that they reasonably consider to be unsafe.



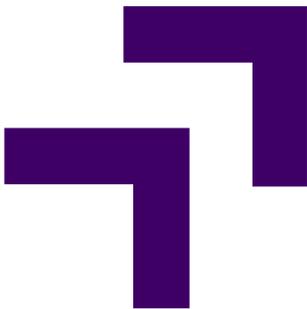


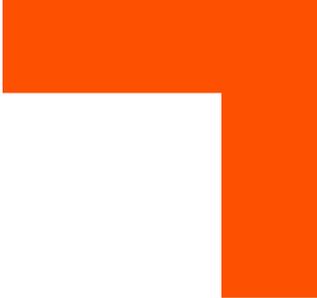
YOUR PEOPLE ARE YOUR BUSINESS. NO MATTER WHERE THEY ARE

Creating a cohesive workforce across locations and complying with a dizzying array of regulatory, cultural and safety concerns is extremely complicated. That is a compelling reason for businesses to turn to a PEO.

A PEO, like TriNet, can help you build the capacity of your HR operations to handle the additional complexity that comes with a distributed workforce. We have HR experts across the country ready to provide administrative, strategic and compliance-related HR support to help you successfully manage a distributed workforce.

To learn more about how we can help you succeed with a multistate workforce, visit [TriNet.com](https://www.trinet.com) or call us at 888.874.6388.





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