

The 6th Largest District in Illinois Transformed Enrollment and Cut 100 Hours in Manual Processes

Managing a district responsible for approximately 21,000 students is no easy task, and when it's comprised of urban, suburban and rural schools that only adds to its complexities. But for Chief Operating Officer Susan Harkin, it's something she has successfully managed for her 20-year career. Harkin not only serves as COO for Community Unit School District 300, but she is also on the Board of Directors for ASBO International.

Having quite the resume, Harkin is well-versed in understanding the need for providing exceptional benefits for her employees but struggled to find a trusted advisor to help administer them.

"I knew there was a need to help, and partner with someone if possible, to not only explain our current benefits, but also to provide other benefits to our employees," she said.

Her luck changed after attending an Arkansas ASBO meeting where she heard firsthand from a fellow administrator about their relationship with American Fidelity Assurance Company. It was there that she was introduced to an American Fidelity representative and discovered the options available to her and her employees.



Client Info

Community Unit School District 300
Algonquin, IL
21,000 Students Served | 2,600 Staff Members



Challenge

Harkin's district was limited in resources to devote to open enrollment. To communicate benefits options to 2,600 employees, they hosted a webinar for their staff where attendance was optional, a process that Harkin says had grown stale. Communicating benefits this way meant that Harkin's team had to visit 26 different buildings to present the webinar 26 different times.

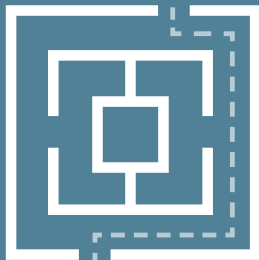
"With 2,600 employees that have access to our insurance, trying to hit all of them in a one-month enrollment period, we didn't even have the manpower to do that," she said.

When it came time to enroll, employees struggled to understand the enrollment platform. They were left spending extra time and late hours self-enrolling, struggling to make the right choices for themselves and their families.

In addition, the district was offering very few benefits to their employees. Outside of the traditional medical, dental, and vision insurance, District 300 was only able to offer some life insurance, something Harkin was eager to change.

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Solution

Wanting to be the type of employer that not only provides a good work environment but an organization that values its employees, Harkin turned to American Fidelity for help. The goal was to provide an easier way for employees to go through open enrollment and more efficient communication to keep them informed and trained on benefit options.

“Our partnership with American Fidelity and having a representative that scheduled appointments with all of our employees really gave that personal touch, that real ability for our employees to dig in and ask the questions,” she said.

Employees quickly began to appreciate the time they spent with their American Fidelity representative and expressed how surprised they were by the amount of information they were provided. Employees were left feeling good about the decisions they’d made for themselves and their families.

“All in this 15-minute, half an hour timeframe, my employees got more information about these very important benefits,” Harkin said.

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Results

After enrollment, District 300 was able to see some valuable changes. Even though they had changed up their medical plan offerings, Harkin attributes a lot of the positive change to their new partnership with American Fidelity.

"After we got through open enrollment, over 100 people changed their health insurance plan over the previous year. It really was attributed to the strength of the product, the strength of that one-on-one conversation," she said.

Not only were employees understanding their benefits now, but Harkin's benefits administration team reduced the amount of time spent managing open enrollment. They no longer needed to visit 26 different buildings to present a webinar, which reduced the time spent preparing for enrollment and the follow-up afterward to answer employee questions.

"The time and energy that was wrapped up in open enrollment on an annual basis is probably upwards of at least 100 hours that we've saved," she said.

Her advice to other organizations considering a switch:

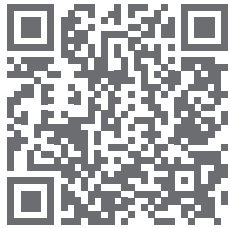
"This is definitely a direction you would benefit from; your employees would benefit from; your budget would benefit from. Over and over again I was shown how American Fidelity was a partner, and really supports school districts, and wanted that opportunity to support teachers, but it wasn't at the expense of a commission check," Harkin said.

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