

# End-to-end colleague care

It's time for a compassionate and comprehensive approach to HR



## “What do you need from your professional community?”

On its surface, it might seem like a simple question. After all, most of us — if not all of us — could use less distractions and more time to focus on our most important tasks (not to mention the work that truly excites us). But think about this: Throughout your career, how many times have leaders stopped to ask what you need?

Many professionals, especially early in their careers, spend ample time pondering what their managers need from them. What if we flipped the script? What if, for instance, bosses were also coaches and mentors, and a community was built on mutual compassion?

That’s the community we are building here at Grant Thornton LLP.

Grant Thornton’s foundation of kindness and trust served our firm well when the COVID-19 pandemic turned our worlds upside down. But even with our solid foundation, the pandemic changed aspects of how we operate as a professional community. We realized early that the effects of this pandemic would be long-lasting; so, too, must our approach to care.

Now, more than two years after COVID-19 cases first appeared in the U.S., there’s talk of the pandemic one day becoming endemic. No matter when that day comes, one thing is clear:

**Our approach to employee care must also be endemic — meaning multi-faceted and constantly evolving.**

This end-to-end care applies to recruits, new hires and longtime colleagues, and it’s comprised of both tangible and intangible elements. It’s how we are continuously approaching this “new normal,” and the next one, too.

It’s how we believe human resources should operate today. And: It starts with listening.

“I still remember the first virtual conversations we had about our community after we shut down for COVID-19. We had just sent everyone home from the office, so physically, many of us were never further apart. That’s why we wanted to be proactive about listening and engaging our people, and that will never change.”

**Mike Monahan**  
National Managing Principal of People & Community

“While many of our solutions, benefits, and adjustments worked to meet the needs of people coping with a pandemic, we’ve always looked forward. We want to lead the industry with a proactive definition of our new normal.”

**Julie Gipe**  
Senior Director of the Partner and Principal Experience

Phrases like “new normal” and “the before times” are now part of our everyday vernacular. Often, we use these terms while discussing what the future of work and life may look like. Yet the truth is, none of us know what that future will bring. And that’s OK.

By approaching challenges as people who are trying to figure it out, we actually can figure it out — together.

That’s what our P&C colleagues have been doing throughout the pandemic, and it’s an effort that expands far beyond typical human resources activities. **Through active listening sessions conducted across our firm, as well as in-depth training and detailed playbooks, P&C has equipped leaders and mentors with the tools they need to be effective listeners and leaders for our people.**

“Our focus is always on making sure our people are heard and respected, and we believe it’s more than OK if we have to find the right answer together.”

**Sabrina Allen**  
Senior Director, People & Community

Further, Grant Thornton’s leaders regularly engage their colleagues, building a relationship that surpasses the typical boss-employee dynamic. Leaders are actively invested in their colleagues’ careers, so instead of focusing solely on the tasks of any given day, our firm’s leaders listen and understand their peoples’ needs and goals. Then, they invest the requisite time and knowledge into each colleague they coach. To continuously cultivate this kind of coaching, Grant Thornton recruiters seek out senior leaders with a proven track record of caring for and elevating the people they lead.



**Similar to many of our new benefits, our active listening approach is not a stopgap measure intended solely for pandemic relief; it's our new normal of caring for our people.**

In fact, active listening is how we've determined the need for many of our benefits before and during the pandemic, and we will continue listening and adding benefits as needed.

For example:

#### **We heard...**

#### **We did...**

We heard some of our people feel stretched thin, especially working parents.

We supplied additional tutoring, childcare, elder care and meal delivery services. And we added a number of extended holiday breaks and summer Fridays off.

We heard people were struggling with anxiety, depression and other mental health challenges — perhaps more than ever before.

We added new counseling services and other resources to provide more holistic healthcare.

We heard our colleagues undergoing gender transitions had difficulty getting their health insurance companies to pay for transition surgery.

We incorporated transition procedures and other LGBTQ+-affirming benefits into our health coverage. What's more, the firm created guidebooks to support colleagues undergoing the gender transition process and leaders who are looking to create a safe environment for colleagues who are transitioning.

We heard many of our colleagues, including millennials and members of Gen Z, like the option to gather in person and meet their leaders.

We embraced a hybrid work model that gives our people the option (but not the requirement) to work from a Grant Thornton office in most business situations.

We heard people were struggling to care for loved ones or manage emergencies.

We adapted a Flexible Time Off policy that allows our people to take the time they need when they need it without the hassle of accessing a predetermined list of days off.

“Our DE&I work, like all of our work, starts with being human. We commit to knowing our people and supporting them for exactly who they are, because we believe that each of us thrive when we have equal access to opportunities that excite and energize us.”

**Rashada Whitehead**  
**National Managing Director of Culture, Immersion & Inclusion**

# Showing support and respect where it matters

“At Grant Thornton, we know needs change over time. That’s why we take a holistic approach to designing and implementing benefits — so we can support our colleagues at every stage in their life journey. These customized benefits are designed with heart and care, and they will continue to evolve as needed to remain in step with changing times.”

**Lou Ann Hutchison**  
Managing Director, People & Community

Each of the benefits mentioned in this document are emblematic of the way P&C operates at Grant Thornton. **We know each of our colleagues have their own distinctive needs and responsibilities at home and at the office.** Challenges like a pandemic will heighten those needs and responsibilities for all of us, but what that looks like is different for each of us.

In other words, we may all be in the same storm, but we’re each in our own boats.

It’s simply not enough to roll out a standard set of benefits and HR strategies and expect people to be their best, truest selves. That’s why, **at Grant Thornton, we listen, understand, then act.**

“All of our efforts begin with the question, ‘What more can we do for our people?’ That’s why we consistently evaluate our benefits, our trainings, and our learning opportunities. What our people needed yesterday may not be the same as what they need today.”

**Wendy Wright**  
Senior Director, Learning & Organizational Effectiveness

“Just as we can’t assume we know what our colleagues are going through, we can’t assume we understand the needs of our future teammates. It’s incumbent upon us to engage our recruits in thoughtful, in-depth conversations about their goals, passions and careers — and to illustrate how we can support them every step of the way.”

**Missy Heusinger**  
**Director of University Recruiting**

Mike Monahan, our National Managing Principal of People & Community, says our approach is ultimately simple. To him, it’s all about “showing up.”

“At the end of the day, everything we do is to show support and respect for our people in real, impactful ways,” Monahan says. This includes our Diversity, Equity & Inclusion work, which is a fundamental component of our community. And, of course, that community is always evolving.

As we continue listening — and as we add even more talented professionals to the Grant Thornton community — our P&C team will adapt to the needs of our people. We do not yet know what those needs may be, just as we don’t know what the next major crisis will be or how it may affect our people. But we’ll always show up. We’ll always be here for our people.

And we’ll always provide support and respect where it matters most.

“At Grant Thornton, we understand that everyone has different needs and circumstances. That’s why we’re determined to meet each of our people where they’re at.”

**Donna Rosenberg**  
**Senior Director, Colleague Relations & Compliance**



# About People & Community (P&C)

Grant Thornton's P&C team is responsible for all stages of colleague care. This includes recruitment, benefits, our culture journey, our DE&I initiatives, alumni relations, and more. The team's work helps foster Grant Thornton's CLEARR values: Collaboration, Leadership, Excellence, Agility, Respect and Responsibility. By supporting every colleague both personally and professionally, P&C ensures the firm delivers on its promise to make business more personal and build trust into every result.



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