



HR Firm Establishes ACA Unit

By Bill Fallon

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Norwalk-based Operations Inc., a human resources consulting firm and outsourcing provider, has established a team of Affordable Care Act consultants in what the company calls “a concerted effort to assist area businesses in complying with the ACA.” The team’s first directive is telling companies to get busy early.

“We have 55 employees,” company CEO David Lewis said. “At this point, we have a total of five lined up to support ACA-related projects and support and will add more as needed based on demand.”

Company officials said “the time has come for businesses to start preparing for Jan. 1, 2016, and the Affordable Care Act.”

According to Operations Inc., which was founded in 2001, businesses normally begin planning their year-end, benefit-related activities in late October, but anticipated issues driven by new reporting requirements should see organizations starting the process as soon as possible.

“We estimate the amount of hours needed to properly address ACA requirements plus year-end employee benefit related activities will be two to three times what businesses have budgeted for in years past,” Lewis said. “As such, we’ve geared up for a greater number of clients requiring expert advice and consultation on how best to address these new rules and challenges.”

The company said key ACA-related issues to consider include:

- Companies with 100-plus employees — or full time equivalents – already are subject to the requirement to offer “affordable care” or face a penalty, effective Jan. 1, 2015.
- Those with 50 to 99 full-time equivalents will have to provide “affordable care” to their employees beginning Jan. 1, 2016, or face a penalty. The ACA dictates the maximum amount an employee can be asked to pay for these plans, with the lowest level plan referred to as a Bronze Level Plan. A business plan design for 2016 may need to change, significantly in some cases, to comply with the ACA or some firms may choose to pay the penalties and maintain their current plan.
- All businesses will have to file new IRS-based forms 1094 and 1095 during the first quarter of 2016, with deadlines for filing these forms dependent on a number of variables; these forms will be filed with the IRS to prove businesses are ACA compliant, or are noncompliant and therefore subject to a penalty.
- Further, the forms must also be given to each employee for the previous tax year, similar to a W-2. Individuals will be required to file these forms with their tax return to prove they have, or do not have, insurance. Employees who have waived offered coverage and who are otherwise not insured will face a personal tax penalty.
- The 1094/1095 form completion process may be time consuming depending on employee headcount as well as how the data has been managed.

Write to info@Operationsinc.com for more information.