



Director of Benefits
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts

THE SEARCH

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), one of the nation's pre-eminent research universities, seeks a strategic, collaborative, and empathetic leader to serve as its next Director of Benefits (Director). MIT is independent and co-educational, with a private endowment of over \$23.5 billion, a total annual operating budget of approximately \$5.10 billion, and a community of 35,000 people, including an active workforce of approximately 17,000 on campus and at the Lincoln Laboratory. The MIT community is driven by a shared purpose: to make the world better through education, research, and innovation. The Director of Benefits and their team is central to helping MIT's employees, retirees, and their dependents sustain and fulfill that shared purpose. You can read more about MIT and the breadth of its academics, activities, and culture [here](#).

Reporting to the Vice President for Human Resources, and in collaboration with MIT leadership, the Director is responsible for developing and delivering competitive and cost-effective benefits and work-life programs that respond to the changing needs of the MIT population and support the Institute's short- and long-term goals and mission. The Director is responsible for the design, pricing, communication, administration, and compliance aspects of MIT's complex and numerous retirement, health and welfare, and work-life programs. Overall, they lead a team of approximately 25 staff, including five direct reports, a client service team, the operations of four onsite childcare centers, and manage significant vendor relationships and contracts.

MIT has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of its next Director of Benefits. Please direct all applications, nominations, and inquiries to Isaacson, Miller as indicated at the end of this document.

BENEFITS AT MIT

MIT offers a full range of benefits and resources designed to keep employees and their dependents healthy, ensure they achieve a fulfilling work-life balance, and help them build long-term financial security. Alongside [retirement](#), [health, and welfare benefits](#), MIT provides employees at all stages of their lives and careers with a variety of [resources and programs](#) to account for life events that may impact their employment.

A core part of the benefits offerings at MIT is [Work-Life](#). Work-Life is committed to meeting the personal and professional needs of staff, faculty, postdocs, graduate students, and their families via a wide range of programs and services. These include backup child and adult care, personal and financial well-being, parenting of children (of all ages), eldercare support, and retirement. Additionally, the Work-Life team, in partnership with Bright Horizons, is responsible for the operational management of four on-site childcare centers. Consultations and referrals to services are available at no cost to MIT staff, faculty, postdocs, and graduate students, as well as their partners and household members. While Work-Life delivers important individualized services, the office also focuses on the high-level systems and infrastructures that affect the quality of life at MIT, promotes best practices in national and international work-life forums, and assists in the development of new policies and services.

You can learn more about the [full benefits portfolio here](#).

ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR OF BENEFITS

The Director is in charge of a comprehensive health and welfare plan that includes active employee medical, dental, and vision coverage, health and dependent care flexible spending accounts, life insurance plans; Global employee medical, prescription, dental, vision, and international Employee Assistance Program (iEAP) benefits; retiree medical, dental, and life insurance plans; Basic Retirement pension plan, and a 401(k) savings plan. Alongside these health and welfare and retirement plan benefits, the Director oversees Work-Life, which includes the Employee Assistance Plan (EAP), tuition and scholarship assistance plans, four on-site childcare centers, and spring and fall seminar programs. In addition to overseeing existing programs, the Director regularly examines the competitive position of MIT's benefits relative to both peer universities and other industry employers.

Beyond the HR office, the Director serves on or advises multiple cross-campus committees such as the Employee Benefits Oversight Committee, the Health and Work Life subcommittees, and the 401(k) Investment Oversight Committee. As needed, the Director also participates in discussions and negotiations with MIT's eight unions. They regularly collaborate with MIT Health, the Executive Vice President and Treasurer, the Provost, the Office of the General Counsel, the Human Resource Advisory Committee, Lincoln Laboratory, and other committees, offices, and organizations to ensure MIT's benefits are administered effectively, continue to respond to the changing needs of the community, and reflect up-to-date technology and emerging market trends and developments. Partnering closely with the HR Communications team, the Director helps shape messaging through print and digital materials, as well as

targeted presentations, to ensure that all benefits-related information is clear, accurate, and accessible. The Director also manages a portfolio of relationships with third-party vendors, such as plan record keepers, claims administrators, a pharmacy collaborative, auditors, attorneys, actuaries, and consultants, to ensure benefits are being administered efficiently, effectively, and in compliance with all applicable regulations. In collaboration with the Vice President for Finance, the Director manages vendor contracts and sourcing, navigates vendor relationships, adherence to service level agreements, oversees programmatic quality, and, where applicable, conducts bidding or negotiation processes.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Ensure that benefits offerings are needed, impactful, and cost-effective

As the landscape of higher education continues to change, the Director will be a proactive and nimble leader, maintaining a focus on efficiency, value-add, and creativity while not sacrificing service, compliance, or the comprehensive offerings MIT has enjoyed to date. In the face of change, they will serve as an advocate for the community, leveraging benefits to improve morale and helping employees navigate difficult life decisions or dissatisfaction with services with grace and tact. A data-driven leader, they will assess programs by financial impact and find areas where services can be shifted from internal offerings to vendors. Further, where necessary, the Director must embrace and leverage technology and systems to improve all aspects of MIT's benefits strategy and delivery.

Lead a dedicated, service-minded team of HR professionals

The benefits team at MIT is empathetic, collaborative, and cares deeply about the health and well-being of the campus community. The Director must lead their team with a spirit of mutual partnership, trust, and respect, and be able to collaborate deeply with and help move them from ideation to implementation with a focus on white-glove service. To ensure organizational unity and consistency, they must lead effective coordination and communication within their own and across other HR functions. Additionally, the Director may be called upon to help their staff navigate and mediate difficult situations, directing who needs to be involved, what benefits or supports to offer, navigating inter-campus dynamics, and giving expert guidance on potential resolutions.

Build authentic and collaborative relationships with leaders, employees, and vendors campus-wide

Given the range of employees and dependents that use MIT's benefits, it is essential that the Director be able to build and navigate authentic cross-campus relationships to provide consistent service across populations with different needs. As such, the Director must have the confidence to work with a range of employees, including senior leaders, and the ability to hear information, quickly synthesize it, and then provide expert guidance. To be successful, the Director must understand and know how to work within and influence MIT's layered and matrixed decision-making structure.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will be an experienced and accomplished leader, demonstrating a track record of operational success leading a complex benefits portfolio. While no single candidate will have all of the qualifications, the search committee seeks candidates with a well-rounded combination of the following abilities:

- Bachelor's degree required, advanced degree and/or professional benefits certifications strongly preferred.
- A minimum of 15 years of experience in benefits planning and management, health care and retirement policy, and benefits administration/operations, preferably in higher education.
- Demonstrated experience identifying, designing, recommending, and implementing efficient, innovative business solutions to address complex benefits challenges.
- Demonstrated experience and commitment to managing varied teams of benefits professionals, and commitment to individual team development.
- Broad understanding of laws, regulations, and governmental programs relating to benefits, including ERISA, HIPAA, ACA, Secure Act, state, and federal regulations
- Demonstrated knowledge of strategic planning, project and time management, resource and budget allocation.
- Advanced skill in negotiation, problem solving, conflict resolution, and decision making.
- Excellent written communication skills, including the ability to convey complex technical information in a clear, understandable way that is tailored to the needs of the target audience(s).
- Excellent verbal communication skills, including the ability to make effective formal presentations to leadership audiences and committees with diverse perspectives.
- Demonstrated leadership ability, especially in a large, complex environment.
- A flexible and collaborative leadership style.
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office software, including Word, Excel, Access, and Outlook; SAP and Oracle preferred.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The role is open to a hybrid work schedule. The salary range for this role is \$230,000 - \$260,000.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Rebecca Kennedy, Managing Partner
Angelo Alexander, Senior Associate
Cortnee Bollard, Managing Search Coordinator

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/massachusetts-institute-technology/director-benefits>

MIT is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive equitable consideration for employment based on their experience and qualifications, and will not be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, or national or ethnic origin. See MIT's [full policy](#) on nondiscrimination.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by MIT. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by MIT would supersede any conflicting information in this document.