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EXECUTIVE AND PROFESSIONAL SEARCH FIRM

EVALUATING YOUR FIRST BCBA OFFER

A free resource from TYGES International, Behavioral Health Recruiting
Free for candidates. Employers pay the fee.

START HERE

Two offers with the same salary can feel very different once you look at billable hours, caseload, supervision, and contract terms. This guide walks through each piece of a BCBA offer so you can compare roles on the full picture.

USE IT IN THREE STEPS

1. Read each section and note how your offer answers it.
2. Ask the employer anything the offer leaves unclear, and get the answers in writing.
3. Fill in the comparison checklist at the end for every offer you receive.

BEFORE YOU START

This guide is general information to help you ask better questions. It is not legal or financial advice.

1 COMPENSATION STRUCTURE

Start by finding out exactly how you are paid, because the structure matters as much as the number.

- **Salary or hourly.** A salaried role pays a fixed amount. An hourly role pays only for hours worked, so ask how many hours are guaranteed each week.
- **Total package.** Add up base pay, bonuses, and the value of benefits so you can compare offers fairly.
- **Sign-on and retention bonuses.** Ask how each is paid out (a relocation bonus, for example, may be split across two paychecks) and whether you must stay a set period to keep it.
- **Clawbacks.** Some employers require repayment of a bonus, relocation, or certification support if you leave early. Read the repayment terms, and look for a minimum commitment, such as a three-year term. Ask what happens if you leave sooner.
- **Raises and reviews.** Ask when the first review happens and what drives a raise. Note how often you are paid, such as twice a month.

2 BILLABLE HOURS

The billable expectation is often the biggest difference between two offers with similar pay, so get the details before you accept.

- **The target.** Ask how many billable hours you are expected to meet each week or month, and whether it applies from day one or after a ramp-up period. Get the exact number in writing. Some offer letters only say you must achieve monthly billable hours, with no figure.
- **How it is measured.** Find out whether the target counts only direct client sessions or also includes supervision and parent training.
- **Cancellations.** Ask what happens to your hours and pay when a session cancels, and how often that happens at this clinic. Also ask whether your schedule is fixed, such as set days and hours each week.
- **Non-billable time.** Clarify whether treatment planning, report writing, billing and authorization reviews, and team meetings are paid time or something you complete on your own.
- **Consequences.** Ask what happens if you fall short of the target, and whether pay, bonus, or standing is affected.

3 CASELOAD, SUPERVISION, AND GROWTH

Your first role shapes your clinical skills for years, so look closely at the support behind the job.

- **Caseload size.** Ask how many clients you will carry, how complex they are, and how your caseload builds over the first few months. If the offer only says you will supervise a caseload, ask for the number.
- **Support for new BCBAs.** Ask who you go to with clinical questions, and whether there is formal mentorship or case consultation.
- **Supervision.** If you supervise RBTs or trainees, ask how many, how supervision time is scheduled, and whether it is counted in your hours.
- **Training.** Find out what onboarding looks like and what ongoing training the clinic provides. Offer letters often list a long set of duties, so ask how your week is split between clients, supervision, and admin work.
- **Growth path.** Ask what the next step looks like, such as senior BCBA or clinical director, and what typically gets someone there.
- **Turnover.** Ask how long the current BCBAs have been with the clinic. A stable team usually signals a healthy environment.

4 BENEFITS

Benefits can add a meaningful amount to your total compensation, so put a value on each one. Many offer letters leave benefits out, so ask where they are written, such as a handbook or a separate benefits document.

- **Health coverage.** Ask when coverage starts, what the monthly premium is for you, and what the deductible looks like.
- **Retirement.** Ask whether there is a retirement plan and whether the employer matches contributions.
- **Paid time off.** Compare vacation, sick days, and holidays, and ask whether PTO is available right away or accrues over time.
- **Continuing education.** Ask whether the employer pays for CEUs, conference attendance, and BACB certification and renewal fees.
- **Mileage and expenses.** For in-home or multi-site roles, ask how travel time and mileage are reimbursed.
- **Flexibility.** Ask about remote days, scheduling flexibility, and how time off around cancellations is handled.

5 THE FINE PRINT

Read the full employment agreement before you sign, and pay particular attention to the clauses that limit what you can do after you leave.

- **Non-compete.** Check how long it lasts, how far it reaches geographically, and what kinds of work it blocks. A broad non-compete can limit where you work next.
- **Non-solicitation.** Look at what it says about clients and staff you may later work with.
- **Repayment terms.** Look for clawbacks tied to bonuses, relocation, training, or certification support, and for any minimum time commitment.
- **Notice period.** Check how much notice you must give and how much the employer must give you. Note whether the employer can change or withdraw the terms later and whether employment is at-will.
- **Job description and title.** Make sure the duties in the agreement match what you were told in interviews.
- **Get answers in writing.** If a recruiter or manager promised something verbally, ask for it to appear in the offer letter. Some letters state that they are not a contract and can be amended at any time, so the specifics you negotiate matter.

A NOTE ON NON-COMPETES

Rules on non-competes differ by state and change over time. If a clause worries you, have an employment attorney review it before you sign.

6 QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU ACCEPT

Bring these to your next conversation with the employer. Clear, specific answers are a good sign.

1. What is the billable hour target, weekly or monthly, and will it be stated in the offer letter?
2. What happens to my pay and hours when sessions cancel?
3. Which tasks are paid non-billable time?
4. How many clients will I start with, and how fast does the caseload grow?
5. Who supports new BCBAs clinically, and how often do we meet?
6. What does a typical first 90 days look like?
7. Are bonuses guaranteed, and are there repayment terms or a minimum commitment if I leave?
8. Where are the benefits written down, when does health coverage start, and what do I pay each month?
9. Does the employer cover CEUs and BACB certification fees?
10. How long have the current BCBAs been here, and why did the last one leave?
11. Does the agreement include a non-compete or non-solicitation clause, and can the employer change the terms later?
12. Can I see the full agreement before I decide, and how long do I have to respond?

7 GREEN FLAGS AND RED FLAGS

The way an employer answers your questions tells you as much as the offer itself.

GREEN FLAGS

- Billable targets are stated in writing and applied fairly during ramp-up.
- Admin, planning, and report-writing time is paid.
- A named mentor or consultation structure exists for new BCBAs.
- Growth paths are described in specific terms.
- The employer answers questions directly, puts promises in writing, and gives you reasonable time to decide.
- Team members have stayed for years.

RED FLAGS

- Billable hours left vague or missing from the offer, or vague answers about cancellations.
- Required work that happens off the clock.
- A very large starting caseload with no ramp-up.
- Heavy restrictions on where you can work after you leave, or terms the employer can change at any time.
- A very short deadline to accept, even one day, or reluctance to share the full agreement.
- Frequent turnover among BCBAs with no clear explanation.

8 WORKING WITH A RECRUITER

Talking with a recruiter costs a candidate nothing, because employers pay the fee.

A good recruiter can:

- Walk you through several roles at once, including billables, pay ranges, and benefits, so you only interview where the numbers work.
- Give honest guidance on pay and help you weigh offers using the checklist at the end of this guide.
- Match you to roles that fit unusual needs, such as a specific setting, schedule, or location.

Contact a recruiter early, even before you are actively looking. If you apply directly to an employer first, a recruiter may no longer be able to represent you for that role, so a conversation up front keeps your options open. A recruiter can only present roles from the employers they work with, so use that conversation alongside your own research.

Ready to talk? Contact details are on the back page.

9 OFFER COMPARISON CHECKLIST

Fill in one column for each offer and compare them side by side.

Item	Offer A	Offer B	Offer C
Employer and role			
Base pay (salary or hourly)			
Guaranteed weekly hours			
Sign-on or relocation bonus			
Repayment terms and minimum commitment			
Billable target (stated in writing)			
Paid non-billable time			
Pay when sessions cancel			
Starting caseload			
Mentorship and supervision			
Training and growth path			
Health coverage and start date			
Retirement match			
PTO and holidays			
CEU and certification support			
Mileage and travel pay			
Non-compete or non-solicit			
Notice period and at-will terms			
Deadline to respond, plus green and red flags noticed			

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TALK TO A RECRUITER FIRST

TYGES International's Behavioral Health practice places BCBAs and ABA clinical leaders nationwide. To talk through your options, reach out to Carol Zimmerman, Director, Behavioral Health Practice. TYGES is free for candidates, because employers pay the fee.

tyges.com/contact **(757) 345-2494**

Congratulations on your credential, and good luck with your search.

This guide is general information to help you ask better questions. It is not legal or financial advice.
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