

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN**

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION

AND

THE PUERTO RICO DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES

The United States Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division (hereinafter referred to as "DOL/WHD" or "Department"), and the Puerto Rico Department of Labor and Human Resources (hereinafter referred to as PRDOL&HR) (collectively referred to as "the agencies" or "the parties") recognize the value of establishing a collaborative relationship to promote compliance with laws of common concern among the regulated community in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

The agencies are forming this partnership to more effectively and efficiently communicate and cooperate on areas of common interest, including sharing training materials, conducting joint investigations, and sharing information as appropriate.

THEREFORE, IT IS MUTUALLY AGREED THAT:

This memorandum of understanding (MOU) agreement is intended to memorialize this understanding between DOL/WHD and PRDOL&HR. This MOU is a voluntary agreement that expresses the good-faith intentions of DOL/WHD and PRDOL&HR; it is not intended to be legally binding, does not create any contractual obligations, and it is not enforceable by any party. This MOU agreement does not obligate and will not result in an exchange of funds, personnel, property, services, or any kind of financial commitment. This MOU agreement outlines procedures to be followed by both DOL/WHD and PRDOL&HR in working together to address the need for effectively and efficiently communicating and cooperating on areas of common interest, providing employers and employees with compliance assistance information, conducting coordinated investigations, sharing training materials, cross training staff, sharing information as appropriate and having outreach events between DOL/WHD and PRDOL&HR.

Agency Responsibilities

DOL/WHD enforces the Federal minimum wage, overtime pay, recordkeeping, and child labor requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act. DOL/WHD also enforces the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act, the Employee Polygraph Protection Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, wage garnishment provisions of the Consumer Credit Protection Act, and a number of employment standards and worker protections as provided in several immigration related statutes. Additionally, DOL/WHD administers and enforces the prevailing wage requirements of the Davis Bacon Act and the Service Contract Act and other statutes applicable to Federal contracts for construction and for the provision of goods and services.

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PRDOL&HR is responsible for administering and enforcing Puerto Rico's labor laws, especially those having to do with minimum wage, overtime, student apprentices, child labor, disabled workers, and equal pay. These responsibilities include but are not limited to regulate business establishment operations; regulation of labor contracts; establishing a sports-training leave without pay; regulating the recruitment of temporary and seasonal workers; establishing a minimum wage for the professional nursing class; establishing a special sports leave-of-absence in the public and private sector; regulating or facilitating controlled substance detection; being an active part in employee-claim cases, especially in those that involve debt collection on their behalf, whether or not the case was started by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Secretary of Labor. The responsibilities must also include the creation of legislation that requires the guaranteed payment of contractor wages in: artistic and or musical productions, including tourist shows; to provide economic relief to every discharged employee; establishing a bonus payment for certain private enterprise employees; legislating for job promotion and vocational training of Youths; establishing a minimum wage in Puerto Rico; and legislate to make public school attendance a compulsory obligation for hired minors and that employees in the industrial sector have one day of rest after 6 straight days of work, and regulate private employment service agencies.

With the specific and mutual goals for providing clear, accurate, and easy-to-access outreach to employers, employees, and other stakeholders, on state labor standards and of sharing resources and enhancing enforcement by conducting joint investigations and sharing information, the parties agree to enter into this partnership.

I. Purpose

The purpose of the MOU is to maximize and improve the enforcement of the laws administered by DOL's DOL/WHD and by PRDOL&HR. This agreement will also encourage enhanced law enforcement and greater coordination between the agencies.

II. Authority

The substantive authority under which the parties will be carrying out the activities contemplated in the MOU is found under 29 U.S.C. § 211 (b).

III. Outreach and Education

- The agencies agree to coordinate, conduct joint outreach presentations, and prepare and distribute publications, when appropriate, for the regulated community of common concern.
- The agencies agree to work with each other to provide a side-by-side comparison of laws with overlapping provisions and jurisdiction.
- The agencies agree to provide a hyperlink on each agency's website linking users directly to the outreach materials in areas of mutual jurisdiction and concern.

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- The agencies agree to jointly disseminate outreach materials to the regulated community, when appropriate.
- All materials bearing the DOL or DOL/WHD name, logo, or seal must be approved in advance by DOL.
- All materials bearing the PRDOL&HR name, logo, or seal must be approved in advance by PRDOL&HR.

IV. Points of Contact (POCs)

- The agencies designate the following POCs responsible for coordinating the partnership activities and meeting annually to review terms and conditions and areas of mutual concern. The agencies will notify each other in the event of the separation or long-term absence of their contact persons.
- POC designees:

Formal POCs:

Designee for DOL/WHD

José R. Vázquez-Fernández, Esq.
District Director
U.S. Department of Labor
Wage & Hour Division
Caribbean District Office
787-775-1710
Vazquez.Jose.R@dol.gov
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Tabonuco St. B-7
Guaynabo, PR 00968

Designee for PRDOL & HR

Sr. Carlos Maldonado
Deputy Director
Labor Standards Bureau
Puerto Rico Department of Labor and Human Resources
787-756-1138
camaldonado@trabajo.pr.gov
Muñoz Rivera Ave., 505 San Juan, PR 00918

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Informal POCS:

Ivonne M. Rivera Maymi
Community Outreach & Resource Planning Specialist (CORPS)
Caribbean District Office
Telephone & Fax (787)775-1728
Cell (787) 565-7190
Rivera.Ivonne@dol.gov
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Guaynabo, PR 00968

Sharlog Del Fresno Torres, Esq.
Director
Legal Affairs and Standards Bureau
Puerto Rico Department of Labor and Human Resources
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sdelfresno@trabajo.pr.gov
Muñoz Rivera Ave., 505 San Juan, PR 00918

V. Enforcement

Where appropriate and to the extent allowable under law,

- The agencies may conduct joint investigations annually in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico if appropriate or if opportunity provides.
- The agencies may coordinate their respective enforcement activities and assist each other with enforcement, where appropriate and to the extent allowable under law.
- The agencies will make referrals of potential violations of each other's statutes, where appropriate.

VI. Information

- The agencies agree to exchange information on laws and regulations of common concern to the agencies, to the extent practicable.
- The agencies will establish a methodology for exchanging investigative leads, complaints, and referrals of possible violations, to the extent allowable by law or policy.
- The agencies will exchange information (statistical data) on incidence of violations in specific industries and geographic areas, if possible.

VII. Training

- The agencies agree to cross train investigators and other staff no less than once per calendar year, subject to agency resources and any applicable legal requirements. Joint training will be conducted to educate staff members of both agencies about the laws and regulations enforced by both, and to discuss issues of common concern.
- The agencies will exchange information related to policy or regulatory changes to State or Federal laws, to the extent permissible.

VIII. Previous Agreements

- This agreement replaces and supersedes any previous Partnership Agreement MOU between the parties.

IX. Effect of MOU Agreement

- This MOU agreement does not authorize the expenditure or reimbursement of any funds. Nothing in this agreement obligates the parties to expend appropriations or enter into any contract or other obligations.
- By entering into this partnership, the agencies do not imply an endorsement or promotion by either agency of the policies, programs, or services of the other.
- Nothing in this MOU agreement is intended to diminish or otherwise affect the authority of either agency to implement its respective statutory or regulatory functions.
- This MOU agreement is not intended to be legally binding and does not confer any rights on any private person.
- This MOU agreement is not intended to confer any rights against the United States, its agencies, or its officers upon any private person.
- Nothing in this MOU agreement will be interpreted as limiting, superseding, or otherwise affecting the agencies' normal operations or decisions in carrying out their statutory or regulatory duties, or duties under any Executive Order. This MOU agreement also does not limit or restrict the parties from participating in similar activities or arrangements with other entities.
- This agreement will be executed in full compliance with the Privacy Act of 1974, the Freedom of Information Act, the Federal Records Act, and any other applicable federal laws and state laws such as Act No. 15, April 14, 1931, as amended, "Organic Act of the Department of Labor and Human Resources", of Act 122 of 2019, "Puerto Rico Open

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Government Data Act,” and Act 141 of 2019, “Transparency and Expedited Procedure for Public Records Access Act” and other state applicable laws.

- This MOU agreement contains all the terms and conditions agreed upon by the agencies concerning the subject matter of the agreement. No other understandings, oral or otherwise, regarding the subject matter of this agreement shall be deemed to exist or be binding upon the agencies. This agreement is not intended to confer any right upon any private person or other third party.

X. Exchange of Information

To the extent permitted by law, the agencies understand that in order to effectuate the purposes and provisions of this MOU, it will be necessary, from time to time, to exchange information, some of which may be considered confidential. It is the policy of each of the parties to cooperate with other government agencies to the fullest extent possible under the law, subject to the general limitation that any such cooperation must be consistent with its own statutory obligations and enforcement efforts. It is the view of the parties that an exchange of information in which both agencies are proceeding with a common legal interest is to their mutual benefit. The agencies to this MOU agreement recognize the importance of being able to provide information to other law enforcement bodies without waiving the privilege of otherwise protected material or make a public disclosure.

It is the policy of DOL/WHD and PRDOL&HR to cooperate with other government agencies to the fullest extent possible under the law, subject to the general limitation that any such cooperation must be consistent with the DOL/WHD’s and PRDOL&HR’s own statutory obligations and enforcement efforts. It is DOL/WHD’s and PRDOL&HR’s view that an exchange of information in cases in which both entities are proceeding on basically the same matter is to our mutual benefit. There is a need for DOL/WHD and PRDOL&HR to provide information to other law enforcement bodies without making a public disclosure.

In consideration of these concerns, and subject to any applicable laws and regulations regarding the handling of such information, the agencies agree as follows:

1. The agencies agree to exchange information on laws and regulations of common concern and interest, to the extent practicable and allowable by law and policy.
2. The parties will be available to discuss and provide information to one another on topics of mutual interest, overlapping jurisdiction, or certain areas of expertise, when able.
3. Exchange of information to one another pursuant to this MOU is not considered a public disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552.

Handwritten initials:
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4. When confidential information is exchanged it will not be released to the public, or to any third party, without the express permission of the agency providing that information, except as required by law including, but not limited to, the Freedom of Information Act. Upon receipt of a public disclosure request, PRDOL&HR agrees to provide DOL/ WHD with notice of the request and an opportunity to pursue legal action to prevent the release of information.
5. When confidential information is exchanged, it shall be used and accessed only for the limited purposes of carrying out activities pursuant to this agreement as described herein. The information shall not be duplicated or re-disclosed without the express written consent or authority of the agency providing the information (hereinafter the "donor agency"), a court order, or as required by law, including the Freedom of Information Act.
6. Confidential information means information that may be privileged or otherwise exempt from disclosure to the public or other unauthorized persons under federal and state laws. Confidential information may include: the identity of persons who have given information to the agencies in confidence or under circumstances in which confidentiality can be implied; any employee statements in enforcement files that were obtained under these conditions; internal opinions, policy statements, memoranda, and recommendations of federal or state employees, including (but not limited to) investigators and supervisors; any records that would otherwise not be subject to disclosure under law as non-final, intra- or inter-agency documents; information or records covered by the attorney-client privilege and the attorney work-product privilege; personal information protected by any relevant law or regulation; individually identifiable health information; and confidential business information and trade secrets.
7. In the event that there is a public proceeding, such as a trial, in which certain records, such as confidential information, may be used or testimony of DOL/WHD's employees sought, DOL/WHD requires that PRDOL&HR notify DOL/WHD.
8. In the event that there is a public proceeding, such as a trial, in which certain records, such as confidential information, may be used or testimony of PRDOL&HR employees sought, PRDOL&HR requires that DOL/WHD notify PRDOL&HR.
9. Should either party receive a request or subpoena that would, fairly construed, seek production of privileged information that it received pursuant to this MOU agreement, the party receiving such a request or subpoena shall take reasonable measures, including but not limited to asserting the common interest privilege, to preclude or restrict the production of such information for ten (10) business days, and shall promptly notify the donor agency that such a request or subpoena has been received, so that the donor agency may file any appropriate objections or motions, or take any other appropriate steps, to preclude or condition the production of such information.


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10. Neither party shall have authority to waive any applicable privilege or doctrine on behalf of the other party, nor shall any waiver of an applicable privilege or doctrine by the conduct of one party be construed to apply to the other party.
11. The agencies will notify one another, through the agency POC identified in this MOU, upon commencement of litigation, a hearing, or other proceeding that may involve the release, through subpoena, introduction of written evidence, or testimony, of information exchanged under this agreement.
12. In addition to the requirements above, Confidential Unemployment Compensation information may be exchanged only subject to the confidentiality requirements of 20 CFR 603.4 and any applicable state laws.
13. For information security purposes, information (including paper-based documents and electronic information such as emails and CDs) exchanged pursuant to this MOU agreement remains the responsibility of the donor agency while in transit. The agencies agree to establish a communication protocol for notifying each agency's designated POC when information is sent to or received from that agency, including information on the form of the transfer and the media type and quantity (when appropriate). An agency expecting to receive information will notify the donor agency if the information is not received as of the next business date following the agreed upon delivery date. Confidential data will be destroyed no later than thirty (30) days after its use and may be transmitted via secure FTP. Use includes the time period required for compliance with federal records retention periods. Confidential data will not be electronically mailed, unless encrypted using approved encryption standards.
14. For information security purposes, after an agency receives information from the donor agency, the donor agency retains no responsibility for any security incidents, inadvertent disclosure, or the physical and information technology safeguards in place for protecting that information by the agency that received it.
15. However, in the event that the agency receiving the information experiences a security incident or disaster that results in the suspected or confirmed inadvertent disclosure of the data exchanged pursuant to this MOU agreement, the agency experiencing the incident or disaster will send formal written electronic notification to the donor agency's designated contact person immediately within 3 days after detection of the incident or disaster. The written electronic notification will describe the security incident or disaster in detail including what data exchanged pursuant to this MOU agreement may have been inadvertently disclosed.
16. At the conclusion of an investigation and prosecution by either party, the receiving agency will return any and all confidential information to the donor agency, except as required by law, including the Records Retention Act.
17. Liability of the U.S. Government is governed by the Federal Torts Claims Act.

XI. Dissemination of Factual Information

The agencies agree to jointly disseminate outreach materials to the regulated community when appropriate. Any such dissemination may not be undertaken without prior notice and approval of each party.

All public materials bearing the United States Department of Labor ("USDOL") or DOL/WHHD name, logo, or seal must be approved in advance by USDOL. Any such materials that include the opinions, results, findings and/or interpretations of data arising from the results of activities carried out under the Agreement shall state that they are the responsibility of the party carrying out the activity and do not necessarily represent the opinions, interpretation, or policy of the other partner.

XII. Resolution of Disagreements

Disputes arising under this Agreement will be resolved informally by discussions between Agency Points of Contact, or other officials designated by each agency.

XIII. General Terms and Conditions

Nothing in this Agreement is intended to conflict with current law(s), regulation(s), or the directives of the parties. If a provision in this MOU is found to be inconsistent with such authority, then that provision shall be reviewed and modified or annulled as agreed to by the parties in writing, but the remaining provisions of this MOU shall remain in force and effect unless otherwise noted.

The parties hereby certify that in signing this MOU they are in compliance with Act No. 1-2012, as amended, known as "Puerto Rico Government Ethics Act of 2011", in connection with the possibility of a conflict of interest.

This agreement will not lead to any fiscal impact to the parties. In addition, both parties recognize that this agreement does not impose any responsibility to financially compensate the other party under any circumstances. Any disbursement of funds that is deemed necessary to implement the objectives of this MOU, will be individually incurred by each one of the parties and will be their own responsibility to bear.

XIV. Registration in the Office of the Comptroller of Puerto Rico

None of the Parties shall act under this MOU until it is registered by the PRDOL&HR, in accordance with Act No. 18 enacted on October 30, 1975, as amended.


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XV. Period of Agreement


This MOU agreement becomes effective upon the signing of both parties and will expire 4 years from the effective date. This agreement may be modified in writing by mutual consent of both agencies. The agreement may be cancelled by either party by giving thirty (30) days advance written notice prior to the date of termination. Renewal of the agreement may be accomplished by written agreement of the parties.

This agreement is effective as of the 21 day of March, 2023.

**United States Department of Labor
Wage and Hour Division**

**Puerto Rico Department of Labor and
Human Resources**

By:  3/21/23
Date
Mark Watson Jr.
Regional Administrator
Northeast Region
U.S. Department of Labor
Wage and Hour Division

By: 
Date
Gabriel Maldonado-González
Secretary
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
Puerto Rico Department of Labor
and Human Resources

CERTIFICATION

I, Sharlog E. Del Fresno Torres, Esq., Attorney at the Department of Labor and Human Resources, certify that after studying and evaluating this document in detail, I have found it correct in all legal aspects. Thereby, I recommend signing it.

In witness whereof, I sign the present certification in San Juan, Puerto Rico on March 17, 2023.


Sharlog E. Del Fresno Torres, Esq