



BY THE NUMBERS

What's New

2014: A Year of Progress

The Department of Labor made substantial investments in the nation's future, committing more than \$1 billion to demand-driven skills and training programs in 2014. Those investments included \$450 million to build industry partnerships with community colleges to expand their career-training programs; \$107 million to help high schools provide hands-on experience and work-based learning opportunities; \$170 million to spur collaborations between employers, nonprofit organizations and federal job training programs to help get the long-term unemployed back to work; and \$100 million to expand apprenticeship programs. With a productive year coming to a close, U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez joined National Economic Council Director Jeffrey Zients and Domestic Policy Council Director Cecilia Munoz on a call with reporters Dec. 18 to discuss the past year's progress in



\$9.3 billion
provided for
JOB TRAINING
in Fiscal 2015

The BEST of our blog

Each week, this space will bring you [the best from our blog](#).

- [2014 Year in Review](#): The Faces Behind the Numbers: We at the Labor Department talk every day about the numbers, facts and figures behind what we do; but behind each data point exists real people — each with a unique story to share, writes Secretary Perez.
- [The Things That Matter in This Holiday Season](#): Recovering back wages for garment industry workers puts money into the hands of hard-working people who earned it, and it's also about making sure that unscrupulous employers don't cheat and force their workers into poverty or law-abiding employers out of business, writes Dr. David Weil, the administrator of the Wage and Hour Division.
- [Charting a Pathway to a Technology-Accessible Workplace](#): When basic workplace tools are inaccessible and leave some individuals unable to perform basic job duties, their opportunities to succeed are limited, writes Kathy Martinez, the assistant secretary of labor for disability employment policy.



creating greater economic opportunity for all Americans. The secretary highlighted the department's investments, and spoke about efforts to make sure all working people earn a fair day's pay for a hard day's work. These efforts included a pending rule to implement the president's executive order to

raise the minimum wage for nearly 200,000 workers in federal construction and service contracts. "I'm proud of what we've accomplished in 2014 to strengthen the middle class and create broadly-shared prosperity," Secretary Perez said. "I'm confident that we will continue that progress for the remaining two years of this administration."

- [Read the Blog Post](#)

Focusing on an End to Homelessness Among Veterans

Key actions to achieve an end to homelessness among veterans by the end of 2015 were discussed at the quarterly meeting of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, chaired by Secretary Perez. The council agreed to a work plan to

Compliance Pays Dividends

Enforcement alone won't allow the Wage and Hour Division to reach its goal of



protecting workers and creating a level playing field for employers.

Greater compliance requires meeting with business owners and employer groups to inform and assist them to operate within labor laws. "Compliance pays off directly from a human resources and profitability perspective," Administrator Dr. David Weil recently told corporate human resources officers at HR Policy's Fall Labor and Employment Relations Conference in Washington, D.C. "Protecting wages can improve retention and employee morale, and happy, content employees can result in improved productivity and a positive bottom line."

- [Read the Blog Post](#)

Laser-like Focus on Safety



In the movies, laser beams destroy aliens; in the workplace, lasers are increasingly used to enhance products and procedures in telecommunications,

health care and manufacturing. To increase safety in the industries that use lasers, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the Laser Institute of America renewed an alliance on Dec. 18. First signed in 2005, the five-year agreement is committed to providing LIA members and others with information, guidance, and training resources to protect the health and safety of people working using lasers. The two organizations will identify training opportunities and areas of emphasis, outreach, and communication activities.

- [Learn About OSHA and LIA's Collaboration](#)

Working in a Winter Wonderland

'Tis the season to remember all who brave adverse weather conditions and work outdoors in the winter. For guidance on how to stay safe in frigid temperatures, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration offers employers and workers a variety of resources



on its website, from how best to shovel snow to how to prevent hypothermia.

- [Learn About Winter Work](#)
- [Read the Blog Post](#)



engage states and cities, deploy targeted resources and leverage

other federal resources, such as the workforce system. The secretary hosted the meeting on Dec. 18 and was joined by Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julian Castro, Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert McDonald, White House Deputy Chief of Staff Kristie Canegallo, U.S. Interagency Council on Homeless Executive Director Laura Zeilinger and other officials. The council heard from two communities, Richmond and Los Angeles, which are developing coordinated entry systems to better serve those experiencing homelessness. The systems ensure that households have ready access to a range of assistance programs and receive a level of assistance that is matched to their needs. Based on the community presentations, the council agreed to help support the implementation of coordinated entry systems and to incorporate this work into agencies' broader efforts to end homelessness. Since 2010, the Obama administration's implementation of a federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness has led to a 33 percent decline in veterans experiencing homelessness.

- [Learn About USICH](#)

International Scene

\$10 Million Grant to Combat Child Labor in Ethiopia

The department has awarded \$10 million to World Vision to promote education and vocational training opportunities and seek to enhance livelihoods and access to social protection programs for youth and their households in Ethiopia. Focusing specifically on the needs of girls, the project aims to address exploitative child labor by providing youth from ages 14 to 17 with marketable skills and support to secure decent work. The project will also support President Obama's Young African Leaders Initiative. "We know when youth are provided skills training and career services that align with needs in the jobs market, they are less likely to be drawn into exploitative labor," said Deputy Undersecretary of Labor for International Affairs Carol Pier. "Our goal is to help vulnerable youth in Ethiopia develop the skills they need to make a successful transition into decent jobs."

- [Read the News Release](#)

Projects to Boost Labor Inspections in Peru and the Philippines

Two projects funded by the department will help to increase the ability of inspectors to protect workers in Peru and the Philippines. In Peru, the department awarded \$2 million to help build the labor law enforcement capacity of the Peruvian Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion's newly-formed National Superintendency of Labor Inspection. In the Philippines, a grant of \$1 million is intended to help improve the effectiveness of labor inspections, particularly in the area of occupational safety and health, and labor rights monitoring by workers, employers, and their representatives. "Labor inspections as a means of enforcing existing labor laws are essential to raising standards for workers around the world," said Deputy Undersecretary for International Labor Affairs Carol Pier.

"These projects will build on existing efforts within Peru and the Philippines to help those countries better enforce their labor laws and protect workers'

Achoo! At Risk of the Flu?

Nearly all of the past 32 flu seasons have peaked in December or soon after. Prepare your workplace to avoid flu outbreaks by taking a few precautions recommended by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The best way to reduce risk



of viral exposure is to follow basic rules of hygiene, like frequent and proper hand-washing, and reminding those who are sick to stay home. OSHA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also highly recommend workers get a flu shot to reduce the chance of suffering the illness' miseries.

- [Learn About the Flu at Work](#)
- [Read the Blog Post](#)

Wraparound Benefits Proposal

A proposed rule would allow group health plan sponsors, in limited circumstances, to offer wraparound coverage to employees purchasing individual health insurance in the private market. The departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Treasury are seeking public comment on the rule, which would amend the definition of excepted benefits to include certain limited wraparound coverage. The proposed rule would give access to high-level benefits to employees who otherwise may not be able to get generous employment-based benefits. It responds to stakeholder responses to a rule proposed last December. The proposal would give businesses new flexibility to meet the unique needs of their workforces.

- [Read the News Release](#)
- [View the Rule](#)
- [Visit healthcare.gov](#)

See You in 2015!

Look for DOL News Brief's next issue in your inbox on Jan. 8, 2015. We'll be back with more exciting Department of Labor news, information and events. Until then, visit our [blog](#) or our [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) pages where we hope that you'll share our latest stories. The newsletter team wishes you a safe and happy holiday season!

Weekly UI Claims

The department reported the advance figure for seasonally adjusted initial Unemployment Insurance claims was 280,000 for the week ended Dec. 20, down 9,000 from the previous week's unrevised level. The four-week moving average was 290,250, a decrease of 8,500 from the previous week's unrevised average.

- [Read the News Release](#)

rights."

- [Read the News Release](#)

DOL Working for You

Training Program Illuminates New Career Path

Justin Hitchcock was working on a spray rig for an agricultural company while attending Mississippi Delta Community College. When the company closed, he followed his grandfather's advice: "you need to find a job, doing something that everybody needs... and you'll never have to worry about being laid off again." Hitchcock enrolled in the college's electrical lineman training program. Funded by the Employment and Training Administration's Workforce Investment Act as part of the Delta Workforce Investment Program, the 16-week



program brought his grandfather's advice to life. Upon graduation, Justin joined Delta Electric Power Association as an apprentice lineman. His supervisor allowed him to go out on every call he could to gain experience and earn his journeyman rating at an accelerated rate. Today, Justin's entire crew is comprised of graduates of the community college program. "Nobody worries about who keeps their lights on, they just want them on. I love being one of the people keeping the lights on," he said.

DOL in Action

Missouri Construction Company Cited in Teen's Death

Robertson Incorporated Bridge and Grading Division has been cited by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration after a 16-year-old laborer was fatally struck by the swinging cab and boom of a crane during disassembly at a construction site in Delta, Mo. OSHA's investigation found the crane operator was unaware that the teen was directed to stand in an inadequately marked danger zone when the incident occurred on June 18, 2014. The Wage and Hour Division also assessed civil money penalties for violating Hazardous Order Number 7, which prohibits minors under age 18 from operating or assisting in the operation of power-driven hoists. "This is a tragic death involving a teenager who should not have been allowed to work on the job site," said Bill McDonald, OSHA's area director in St. Louis.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Amputation Hazards Among Dangers at Chimney Supply Company

Olympia Chimney Supply Inc. in Scranton, Pa., was cited by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for 14 safety violations, including 13 serious. A June 2014 inspection determined the company failed to take proper precautions to prevent the dangers of amputation, laceration and crushed fingers. Unguarded machinery, electrical hazards, and deficiencies in the lockout/tagout program were among the cited hazards. OSHA initiated the investigation in response to a complaint and as part of its National Emphasis Program on Amputations. Proposed penalties total \$49,000.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Ohio Contractor Again Exposes Roofers to Fall Hazards

Occupational Safety and Health Administration inspectors witnessed three employees of Proframing Contractors Inc. working up to 20 feet above ground without fall protection on a commercial building in Gahanna, Ohio, in

Upcoming Deadlines & Events

Open Funding Opportunities

OASAM — Vendor Outreach Session

- [January 21 — Washington, DC](#)

OFCCP — Everything You Want to Know About Adverse Impact

- [January 23 — Chicago, IL](#)

OFCCP — Revised Supply and Service Scheduling Letter and Itemized Listing

- [January 8 — Los Angeles, CA](#)

OFCCP — Section 503 and VEVRAA Regulations

- [January 29 — Houston, TX](#)

OFCCP — Understanding AAP Requirements

- [January 8 — Houston, TX](#)

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October. The inspectors responded with citations for two willful, two serious and one repeat safety violation, with proposed penalties of \$68,200. The company has shown a consistent disregard for safety and been cited with 10 similar violations in the past eight years.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Louisiana Packing Plant Ignores Dangerous Hazards

After a Graphic Packaging International Inc. employee suffered a severe injury in June 2014 when the worker's hand was caught in a moving printing press, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration cited the West Monroe, Louisiana, employer for 28 safety violations. Workers were exposed to machinery hazards; failure to guard all nip points, or pinch points, on large printing presses; and failure to implement lockout/tagout procedures to shut down the equipment properly to protect workers during maintenance and repair. "Moving machine parts can cause severe workplace injuries, such as crushed fingers or hands, amputations, burns or blindness when safeguards are ignored. Employers have a responsibility to protect workers from these hazards," said Dorinda Folse, OSHA's area director in Baton Rouge. Proposed penalties total \$129,000.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Tree Trimmer Fatally Injured in Vehicle Rollover

The Davey Tree Expert Co., based in Kent, Ohio, was cited by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration after a tree trimmer was fatally injured when a utility task vehicle ran over him at a Claysburg, Pa., work site. OSHA's June 2014 investigation found one willful violation under the Occupational Safety and Health Act's general duty clause because the company put the employee and others at risk by using the vehicle on a slope exceeding the 15-degree limit permitted by the manufacturer. Davey Tree faces a \$70,000 proposed penalty.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Former Kentucky Union Official Sentenced to Prison for Embezzlement

The former executive secretary to the general chairman of the Locomotive Engineers, International Brotherhood of Teamsters General Committee of Adjustment 4, in Independence, Ky., recently was sentenced to 18 months in prison, three years of probation, and ordered to pay \$206,056 in restitution. In May 2014, Reda Overton pled guilty to one count of embezzlement in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee. The Office of Labor-Management Standards found that Overton wired money from multiple union accounts to her personal bank account, and then bought furniture and remodeled a rental property with the ill-gotten funds.

Tweets

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