

Department of Labor



Customer Service Plan 2011

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Labor (DOL) serves millions of customers in pursuit of its mission to secure good jobs for everyone. As required by Executive Order 13571 on Streamlining Service Delivery and Improving Customer Service, DOL has developed this plan. This document identifies specific actions and initiatives that will further advance DOL's customer service profile over the next year, focusing on one technology-driven signature initiative and three key service areas: **workers in federal contracting, worker safety and health, and worker rights**. These service areas capture high-volume, critical interactions between DOL and the public.

Driven by provisions in the President's Executive Order, DOL's customer service program seeks to ensure that all customer requests are handled efficiently and effectively, regardless of the communication channel used to initiate contact. DOL services must be timely, accurate, and complete across agencies and programs, with responses originating from subject matter experts and answers relayed to the customer in a professional and courteous manner.

DOL's customer service plan will be implemented using a phased approach. Phase I will focus on a Signature Initiative and three key services:

SIGNATURE INITIATIVE
<p>Overview: There is a lack of awareness by the general public about the large amount of U.S. Department of Labor data available to help individuals better understand the job market, allow consumers to assess companies' labor practices, and better connect workers to good jobs, local training opportunities, and other resources. DOL will engage the developer community directly to encourage the creation of applications that package DOL's enforcement, employment and labor market data in a user-friendly way. The first applications will focus on delivering data from DOL enforcement agencies and the Bureau of Labor Statistics to the public.</p> <p>Timing: Labor market and enforcement data are currently available to developers. Additionally, Challenge.gov contests have been issued and 3rd party applications should be available beginning November 1st, 2011.</p> <p>Key Customer Groups: Job seekers, individuals planning a career change, relocating, or planning their career paths; researchers.</p> <p>Challenges: There is a general lack of awareness about DOL data available for public consumption. Currently, very few applications allow the public to make decisions based on DOL's enforcement actions and labor market data.</p> <p>Featured Actions: Publish DOL Application Programming Interfaces (API) and Software Development Kits (SDK) to make data available to third party developers; make use of Challenge.gov to engage the public in enforcement and occupational employment statistical information.</p>
SERVICE 1: DEFENDING WORKPLACE RIGHTS BY PROVIDING WORKERS AND FEDERAL CONTRACTORS TIMELY, ACCURATE AND USEFUL INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

<p><i>Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP)</i></p>
<p>Overview: DOL/OFCCP ensures that Federal contractors and subcontractors meet their affirmative action and equal employment opportunity requirements by: conducting compliance evaluations and complaint investigations; obtaining and monitoring conciliation agreements, and seeking other remedies to make victims of discrimination whole; educating workers on their rights; and providing technical assistance to help contractors understand their legal obligations and support voluntary compliance.</p> <p>Key Customer Groups: One in four American workers is employed by a company that receives Federal funds for contracted work. This is roughly equivalent to 200,000 businesses with contracts totaling almost \$700 billion. In addition, countless others apply for employment with Federal contractors or are former employees of these contractors.</p> <p>Challenges: Customer awareness of service; ensuring consistent advice and quality service across channels.</p> <p>Featured Actions: Increase stakeholder awareness by strategically engaging in worker outreach; increase ability for contractors and subcontractors to submit information electronically; reduce complaint processing times with the implementation of a new case management system.</p>
<p>SERVICE 2: ENSURING WORKER SAFETY AND HEALTH <i>Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)</i></p>
<p>Overview: DOL’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) ensures safe and healthful working conditions for workers by setting and enforcing standards and by providing training, outreach, education and assistance for workers, employers and state agencies. Each year, OSHA receives approximately 18,000 complaints, conducts approximately 40,000 inspections, and holds hundreds of training sessions.</p> <p>Key Customer Groups: Employees; employers; approved state health and safety programs; health and safety professionals.</p> <p>Challenges: Low awareness or mistrust of OSHA by certain vulnerable groups; handling of complaints; misinformation among employers and employees of legal requirements.</p> <p>Featured Actions: Increase outreach to vulnerable workers; increase assistance to small businesses; communicate processing times to customers; revise selection criteria for investigations.</p>
<p>SERVICE 3: HELPING WORKERS SECURE WORKPLACE RIGHTS <i>Wage and Hour Division (WHD)</i></p>
<p>Overview: DOL’s Wage and Hour Division protects and enhances the welfare of the nation’s workforce by promoting and achieving compliance with labor standards, including the Federal minimum wage, overtime pay, recordkeeping, and child labor requirements under the Fair Labor Standards Act. DOL also enforces a number of worker protections provided by the Family Medical Leave Act, statutes covering agricultural workers, various immigration statutes as well as the statutes that set prevailing wage requirements for Federal contracts for construction and for the provision of goods and services.</p> <p>Key Customer Groups: Approximately 130 million workers and 7.3 million employers are covered by the statutes that WHD administers and enforces; Federal agencies and Federal contractors and subcontractors are covered by the laws that govern prevailing wage and hour requirements for certain Federal contracts</p> <p>Challenges: Customer awareness of worker protection laws and WHD’s investigative authority; efficient and effective handling of complaints</p> <p>Featured Actions: Develop new tools for customers to understand rights and obligations under key laws; develop new case management module to enable efficient complaint intake and handling; obtain</p>

ongoing and timely customer input by surveying both complainant and employer customers

The following sections provide more detail on the actions DOL will take to ensure high-quality customer service.

SIGNATURE INITIATIVE

Overview: DOL will create multiple contests encouraging developers to build applications utilizing publicly-available employment, labor market and enforcement data collected by DOL. The goal will be to deliver this data to consumers in a more user-friendly way, assisting individuals to better understand the job market, allow consumers to assess companies' labor practices, and better connect workers to good jobs, local training opportunities, and other resources. **This was completed during FY11 Q4.** In FY12 Q1 DOL will evaluate the effectiveness of the Challenge.gov contents for liberating its data to the public to determine if it should continue leveraging Challenge.gov or choose another service.

Key Customer Groups: Job seekers, individuals planning a career change, relocating, or planning their career paths; researchers.

Challenges: Low awareness about DOL data available for public consumption; raw data is not usable by the general public.

DOL will use the challenge.gov platform to encourage developers to build applications to use publicly-available employment and labor market data collected by DOL in a more user-friendly way. DOL will develop key business requirements for the applications that will provide useful information to assist individuals in planning their education, changing careers, relocating, applying for jobs, or deciding which businesses to support.

DOL launched two challenges as the first phase of this effort:

1. **Occupational Employment Data Application** – The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) collects a wealth of information, including Occupational Employment Statistics, but this data is not used as much as it could be by workers. The application will assist individuals in planning their education, changing careers, relocating, or negotiating compensation packages by generating customized results on wages, employment growth, unemployment, industry outlook based on: geographic location, occupation, industry and other user-selected criteria. The challenge closed and we received 8 submissions that will be evaluated on FY12-Q1, and they are already accessible by the public.
2. **Enforcement Data Application** – This application will use enforcement data from Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Wage and Hour Division (WHD) in a way that drives consumer market choices and rewards businesses with positive track records. We received 9 submissions that will be evaluated on FY12-Q1, and they are already accessible by the public.

DOL will implement this Signature Initiative within the following timeframe:

- Develop and refine business requirements (*By July 1st*) – *Completed FY11-Q4*
- Post announcement on challenge.gov (*By July 15th*) – *Completed FY11-Q4*
- Review submissions within 30 days (*By October 17th*) – *Will be completed FY12-Q1*
- Select and announce winning proposals (*By November 1st*) – *Will be completed FY12-Q1*

SERVICE 1: DEFENDING WORKPLACE RIGHTS BY PROVIDING WORKERS AND FEDERAL CONTRACTORS TIMELY, ACCURATE AND USEFUL INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Overview: DOL's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) ensures that Federal contractors and subcontractors meet their affirmative action and equal employment opportunity requirements. OFCCP educates workers on their rights by conducting approximately 500 training sessions and 1,200 general outreach events annually; conducting approximately 4,100 compliance evaluations and complaint investigations annually; obtaining approximately 650 conciliation agreements annually from contractors and subcontractors who violate the law; and providing technical assistance to help contractors and subcontractors understand their legal obligations and support voluntary compliance.

Key Customer Groups: An estimated one in four American workers is employed by a company that receives Federal funds for contracted work. That is roughly equivalent to 200,000 businesses with contracts totaling almost \$700 billion. In addition, countless others apply for employment with Federal contractors or are former employees of these contractors.

Challenges: OFCCP faces the challenge of ensuring the diverse and vulnerable worker populations we protect have ready access to useful information on worker rights, and that companies doing business with the Federal government understand their responsibilities under the laws OFCCP enforces. We are also challenged to use technology to reduce the burden of compliance on contractors and to appropriately inform alleged victims of employment discrimination and Federal contractors of the progress of complaint investigations and compliance evaluations.

1. Increase Feedback from Customers

- Increase workers' awareness of their legal rights by establishing a standing panel of worker-protection groups for quarterly focus groups to help OFCCP develop and refine outreach strategies targeting women and under-represented minority workers. This is consistent with our goal of ensuring the delivery of timely, accurate and useful information to workers so that they can protect and defend their workplace rights. *(Beginning in calendar year 2012)*
- Reduce unnecessary burdens on contractors by conducting annual contractor focus groups to identify ways to leverage the use of technology to reduce the burden associated with records/data production, and to understand the contractors' perspectives on interactions with OFCCP. *(Annually, Beginning in calendar year 2012)*
- Improve training for workers on their workplace rights by collecting and analyzing satisfaction survey data submitted by training participants following each training session. *(Beginning in calendar year 2012)*
- Improve how OFCCP provides its customers with information by soliciting and using feedback collected through the use of tools such as pop-up surveys, questions at the bottom of key Web pages, and other appropriate means. *(Beginning in calendar year 2013)*
- Improve how OFCCP processes discrimination complaints by analyzing, quarterly, data collected through customer satisfaction surveys completed at the end of phone interactions and returned by email as a part of the agency's public email service. *(Beginning in calendar year 2012)*

2. Adopt Best Practices for Improving Customer Experience

- Provide the public useful and reliable information by ensuring consistent responses to customer inquiries, regardless of customer service channel, through developing and adopting standardized responses to frequently asked questions. *(Complete in calendar year 2012)*
- Improve the phone and online experience of customers by transitioning the operation of OFCCP's Help Desk and Customer Service Center toll-free phone lines and public email box to the department-wide National Contact Center; and by developing an initial automated response that informs callers of information available on the OFCCP Web site. *(Complete in calendar year 2012)*
- Improve the customer service experience by, at least quarterly, collecting and analyzing data on the number and type of customer calls and email inquiries the agency received. *(Quarterly, Beginning in calendar year 2012)*
- Allow contractors to submit data or other information online by developing an online application with electronic authentication. *(Beginning in calendar year 2013)*
- Improve service to non-English-speaking workers by developing and adopting an agency Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plan and increasing the amount of information available in languages other than English. *(Beginning in calendar year 2012)*
- Ensure seamless government-wide experience for employees who file discrimination complaints by increasing coordination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) on complaint/charge referral procedures and information-sharing This coordination may include creating procedures for routine access to and exchange of electronic data bases, including, but not limited to, lists of proposed and completed compliance evaluations, systemic, and individual cases and conciliation agreements and settlements; establishing an ongoing Compliance Coordination Committee (CCC); developing automatic notices to employees when complaints are transferred to the EEOC; and developing joint materials for employee training sessions on workplace rights. *(Beginning in calendar year 2012)*

3. Set, Communicate, and Use Customer Service Metrics and Standards

- Allow workers to check the status of their complaints online by developing a Web portal or application. *(Beginning in calendar year 2013)*
- Provide consistent service to customers by establishing and publicizing clear timeframes for responding to customer inquiries and complaints, using automatically generated responses when appropriate, and notifying customers within two weeks of the filing of a complaint whether it is within the agency's jurisdiction and will be investigated. *(Beginning in calendar year 2012)*
- Resolve worker and contractor complaints effectively by developing and implementing a standard process for escalating issues for priority attention. *(Beginning in calendar year 2012)*
- Create a culture of customer service by developing a quarterly dashboard for the OFCCP Director, Deputy Secretary and Secretary with targets and actual performance for key customer service metrics (e.g., satisfaction scores; complaint processing times; number of audits). *(Beginning in calendar year 2012)*

4. Streamline Agency Processes to Reduce Costs and Accelerate Delivery

- Decrease complaint processing time (from intake to jurisdictional determination) from 14 days to 7 days by implementing new case management system and automating parts of complaint processing. *(Beginning in calendar year 2013)*
- Decrease the possible burden of compliance with applicable regulations by allowing contractors to submit workforce data and other information online through the development of an online application with electronic authentication. *(Beginning in calendar year 2013)*

- Increase the quality and effectiveness of compliance evaluations by delivering improved skills-based training, and providing training on agency enforcement priorities, to Compliance Officers. *(Beginning in calendar year 2012)*
- Increase communication between the regional offices and national office to improve the reporting of enforcement information and support collaboration with DOL Solicitor's Office. *(Beginning in Calendar year 2012)*
- Identify and address process problems by analyzing common customer inquiries and feedback, and the volume of inquiries and categorization of top reasons for inquiries, in periodic meetings with representatives from national office and all regional and district offices. *(Beginning in calendar year 2012)*

SERVICE 2: ENSURING WORKER SAFETY AND HEALTH

Overview: DOL's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) ensures safe and healthful working conditions for workers by setting and enforcing standards and by providing training, outreach, education and assistance. Each year, OSHA receives approximately 18,000 complaints, conducts approximately 40,000 inspections, and holds hundreds of training sessions.

Key Customer Groups: Employees; employers; approved state health and safety programs; health and safety professionals.

Challenges: Low awareness or mistrust of OSHA by certain vulnerable groups; handling of complaints; misinformation among employers and employees of legal requirements.

1. Increase Feedback from Customers

- Improve how information is presented online by getting feedback on OSHA's website. Feedback mechanisms may include the use of existing tools (e.g., Web Site Customer Satisfaction Survey) and groups (e.g., Alliance Program Construction Roundtable) and new feedback mechanisms (e.g., focus groups) that could be implemented under the expedited Paperwork Reduction Act procedures provided in Executive Order 13571. *(FY 2012)*
- Improve training sessions by distributing and reviewing standard comment card after all trainings. Suggestions for improvement will feed into the process improvement life cycle. *(FY 2012)*
- Increase workers' awareness of safety and health standards by working with existing advisory committees, cooperative program participants, and other organizations to develop and refine an outreach strategy for vulnerable groups of workers. *(FY 2012)*
- Identify and respond to emerging customer needs by discussing this issue during existing conference calls with field office personnel (e.g., quarterly Compliance Assistance call, DEP monthly calls, etc.). *(FY 2012)*

2. Adopt Best Practices for Improving Customer Experience

- Increase assistance to small employers by continuing efforts to promote OSHA's free consultation service and exploring new ways to promote the service. *(Ongoing)*
- Increase awareness of OSHA's role and practices by creating and disseminating (through the Web site and other means) a top-10 list of common customer misperceptions. *(FY 2012)*
- Continue to provide and refine outreach and training resources used by OSHA's compliance assistance specialists and other field staff for specific audiences, including customers with limited English proficiency. *(Ongoing)*

- Allow phone callers to receive information on their own by refining the interactive voice recognition system for OSHA’s toll-free number. *(FY 2013)*
 - Continue to improve scripts used by OSHA call center customer service representatives to reflect customer feedback and streamline service delivery. *(Ongoing)*
- 3. Set, Communicate, and Use Customer Service Metrics and Standards**
- Communicate complaint response time metrics to complainants by posting online, incorporating into call center scripts, and creating auto-reply emails to online complaints. *(FY 2012)*
 - Allow complainants to check on status of complaints by calling OSHA’s toll-free number rather than having to know which specific field office to contact. *(FY 2013)*
 - Allow complainants to check on status of complaints online by creating basic search capability. *(FY 2013)*
 - Communicate expected processing time (through an auto reply feature) to customers who submit questions through the e-correspondence system. *(FY 2012)*
- 4. Streamline Agency Processes to Reduce Costs and Accelerate Delivery**
- Increase efficiency of online complaint process by standardizing required inputs for intake form (e.g. drops downs, sample choices, etc.) to minimize need to seek additional required data submissions for complaints. *(FY 2013)*
 - Ensure maximum impact of OSHA-initiated inspections by reviewing selection criteria and evaluating/revising targeting as needed. *(FY 2012)*
 - Continue to review OSHA Web pages to eliminate duplicative pages and make information easier to find. *(Ongoing)*

Note: all dates and timelines are subject to budget and resources

SERVICE 3: HELPING WORKERS SECURE WORKPLACE RIGHTS

Overview: DOL protects and enhances the welfare of the nation’s workforce by promoting and achieving compliance with labor standards, including the Federal minimum wage, overtime pay, recordkeeping, and child labor requirements under the Fair Labor Standards Act. DOL also enforces a number of worker protections provided by the Family Medical Leave Act, statutes covering agricultural workers, various immigration statutes as well as the statutes that set prevailing wage requirements for Federal contracts for construction and for the provision of goods and services.

Key Customer Groups: Approximately 130 million workers and 7.3 million employers are covered by the statutes that WHD administers and enforces; Federal agencies and Federal contractors and subcontractors are covered by the laws that govern prevailing wage and hour requirements for certain Federal contracts

Challenges: Difficulty understanding legal rights and obligations under Federal Wage and Hour laws, including WHD’s investigative authority and what to expect if you file a complaint; efficient and effective handling of worker complaints

1. Increase Feedback from Customers

- Improve communication materials by increasing use of stakeholder review of outreach materials, including a redesigned website, before release. (Begin Q1 FY12)
- Improve employer education materials and complaint investigation process by surveying employers investigated under the FLSA to determine customer satisfaction and understanding of compliance requirements. (2012)
- Ensure WHD's regulatory and enforcement plans are tailored to the need for and use of Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave by conducting a survey of employees and employers. (2012; Dependent upon OMB approval)

2. Adopt Best Practices for Improving Customer Experience

- Allow workers to track hours worked and calculate wages owed on a weekly basis by developing downloadable apps for additional smartphone platforms (BlackBerry and Android) and expand functionality across applications, including existing platforms (iPhone). (FY12)
- Help youth workers determine whether their job duties and hours worked comply with Federal child labor laws through a downloadable app for smartphones and a redesigned "YouthRules" website. (App will be released in FY12; website to be released Spring 2012)
- Increase engagement with community-based organizations, state and local government agencies, employers, and employer associations in support of WHD's enforcement efforts by hiring and deploying new Community Outreach Planning Specialists to coordinate compliance assistance and promote awareness among employers and employees of WHD's investigative authority in five regions throughout the country. (Complete hiring and deployment by end of Q1 FY12)
- Improve agency response times to customer phone inquiries by implementing an interactive voice recognition system, among other efforts. (End of FY12)

3. Set, Communicate, and Use Customer Service Metrics and Standards

- Design a new web interface that will enable complainants to check the status of their complaint online. (End of FY12)
- Communicate average processing times to customers at all points of service, including on websites, in phone scripts, and in written communications with complainants. (End of FY12)
- Implement accountability review standards for managers that include customer-service-related metrics (e.g., complaint processing times). (Q1 FY12)

4. Streamline Agency Processes to Reduce Costs and Accelerate Delivery

- Maximize impact of WHD's enforcement resources by designing and piloting a new complaint intake module that helps identify complaints and potential investigations that will most deter violations. (FY12)
- Ensure WHD effectively acts on complaints by designing and piloting a new module that will alert managers and investigators to actions that need to be taken in order to ensure that complaints are reviewed, assigned, investigated and concluded in a timely manner. (FY12)
- Develop notification program that alerts the public when DOL has secured an agreement to pay back wages from an employer and there are wages to be claimed by workers DOL has been unable to locate. (FY12)