Roughly 1 in 4 employees of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) contributed less than 5 percent of their salary to the agency’s retirement savings program, the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), in 2015.

Seeking effective ways to improve retirement security for its employees, DOL commissioned a study to determine whether easy-to-implement, low-cost behavioral interventions, such as strategic emails, could increase rates of employee contribution to retirement savings.

**EMAILS RESULTED IN BIG BENEFITS**

Two carefully designed emails led to a 7.5% percentage point increase in the share of employees saving at least 5 percent of their salary, thus getting the full employer match.

**STUDY SNAPSHOT**

Quick experiments (randomized controlled trials) to measure the impacts of emails that included:

- 4,681 employees contributing less than 5 percent of their salary in 2 phases during 2015 and 2016.
- Administrative data on participation in the TSP was used to measure impacts.

**EMAILS ADDRESSED BEHAVIORAL BARRIERS TO ENCOURAGE SAVING**

The study team identified the following behavioral factors that may affect DOL employees’ decisions about contributing to the TSP and designed emails with features to address them:

- Not paying **attention** to or understanding the importance and ease of saving now
- Choosing to **spend money now**, rather than spend money later
- Being presented with **too much information**
- **Procrastinating** and letting hassle factors get in the way

Learn more about this study at [http://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/BIStudy/](http://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/BIStudy/)