

FY 2026

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

SPECIAL BENEFITS FOR DISABLED COAL MINERS

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SPECIAL BENEFITS FOR DISABLED COAL MINERS

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SPECIAL BENEFITS FOR DISABLED COAL MINERS

APPROPRIATION LANGUAGE

For carrying out title IV of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977, as amended by Public Law 107-275, \$24,585,000, to remain available until expended.

For making after July 31 of the current fiscal year, benefit payments to individuals under title IV of such Act, for costs incurred in the current fiscal year, such amounts as may be necessary.

For making benefit payments under title IV for the first quarter of fiscal year 2027, \$5,900,000, to remain available until expended.

Note.—This account is operating under the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (Division A of Public Law 119–4).

SPECIAL BENEFITS FOR DISABLED COAL MINERS

AMOUNTS AVAILABLE FOR OBLIGATION						
(Dollars in Thousands)						
	FY 2024 Enacted		FY 2025 Enacted		FY 2026 Request	
	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount
A. Appropriation	13	\$22,890	13	\$24,367	12	\$24,585
Sequestration Reduction Pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985	0	-\$293	0	-\$295	0	\$0
Unobligated Balance Carried Forward from Prior Year	0	\$15,569	0	\$9,052	0	\$3,995
First Quarter Advance Appropriation, Prior Year	0	\$10,250	0	\$7,000	0	\$6,000
B. Gross Budget Authority	13	\$48,416	13	\$40,124	12	\$34,580
Unobligated Balance Carried Forward from Prior Year	0	-\$15,569	0	-\$9,052	0	-\$3,995
First Quarter Advance Appropriation, Prior Year	0	-\$10,250	0	-\$7,000	0	-\$6,000
C. Budget Authority	13	\$22,597	13	\$24,072	12	\$24,585
Unobligated Balance Carried Forward from Prior Year	0	\$15,569	0	\$9,052	0	\$3,995
First Quarter Advance Appropriation, Prior Year	0	\$10,250	0	\$7,000	0	\$6,000
D. Total Budgetary Resources	13	\$48,416	13	\$40,124	12	\$34,580
Unobligated Balances	0	-\$9,052	0	-\$3,995	0	-\$1,349
E. Total, Estimated Obligations	13	\$39,364	13	\$36,129	12	\$33,231

SPECIAL BENEFITS FOR DISABLED COAL MINERS

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

(Dollars in Thousands)

	FY 2025 Enacted	FY 2026 Request	Net Change
Obligational Authority			
Benefit Payments	\$26,200	\$25,600	-\$600
Administrative ¹	\$5,167	\$4,985	-\$182
Total Obligational Authority	\$31,367	\$30,585	-\$782
Full Time Equivalents			
Operating Activities	13	12	-1
Total	13	12	-1

Explanation of Change	FY 2026 Change							
	FY 2025 Base		Trust Funds		General Funds		Total	
	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount
Increases:								
A. Built-Ins:								
To Provide For:								
Costs of pay adjustments	13	\$1,492	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Personnel benefits	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Employee health benefits	0	\$585	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Moving allowance	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA)	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Benefits for former personnel	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Travel and transportation of persons	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Transportation of things	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Rental payments to GSA	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Communications, utilities, and miscellaneous charges	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Printing and reproduction	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Advisory and assistance services	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Other services from non-Federal sources	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Working Capital Fund	0	\$417	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Other Federal sources (DHS Charges)	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Other goods and services from Federal sources	0	\$2,014	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Research & Development Contracts	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Operation and maintenance of facilities	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0

¹ This appropriation is subject to a sequestration reduction pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. All amounts displayed for that appropriation are pre-sequestration levels.

SPECIAL BENEFITS FOR DISABLED COAL MINERS

FY 2026 Change

Explanation of Change	FY 2025 Base		Trust Funds		General Funds		Total	
	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount
Operation and maintenance of equipment	0	\$659	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Supplies and materials	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Equipment	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Grants, subsidies, and contributions	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Insurance claims and indemnities	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Built-Ins Subtotal	13	+\$5,167	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
B. Programs:								
Programs Subtotal			0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Total Increase	13	+\$5,167	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Decreases:								
A. Built-Ins:								
To Provide For:								
Built-Ins Subtotal	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
B. Programs:								
Benefits	0	\$26,200	0	\$0	0	-\$600	0	-\$600
Attrition SBDCM	0	\$0	0	\$0	-1	-\$182	-1	-\$182
Programs Subtotal			0	\$0	-1	-\$782	-1	-\$782
Total Decrease	0	+\$26,200	0	\$0	-1	-\$782	-1	-\$782
Total Change	13	+\$31,367	0	\$0	-1	-\$782	-1	-\$782

SPECIAL BENEFITS FOR DISABLED COAL MINERS

BUDGET AUTHORITY BY OBJECT CLASS²					
(Dollars in Thousands)					
		FY 2024 Enacted	FY 2025 Enacted	FY 2026 Request	Diff. FY 2026 Request / FY 2025 Enacted
	Full-Time Equivalent				
	Full-time Permanent	13	13	12	-1
	Total	13	13	12	-1
	Average ES Salary	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Average GM/GS Grade	12	12	12	0
	Average GM/GS Salary	\$111,149	\$113,366	\$113,366	\$0
11.1	Full-time permanent	1,355	1,466	1,353	-113
11.3	Other than full-time permanent	0	0	0	0
11.5	Other personnel compensation	26	26	26	0
11.9	Total personnel compensation	1,381	1,492	1,379	-113
12.1	Civilian personnel benefits	544	585	540	-45
13.0	Benefits for former personnel	0	0	0	0
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons	0	0	0	0
22.0	Transportation of things	0	0	0	0
23.1	Rental payments to GSA	0	0	0	0
23.3	Communications, utilities, and miscellaneous charges	0	0	0	0
24.0	Printing and reproduction	0	0	0	0
25.1	Advisory and assistance services	0	0	0	0
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources	0	0	0	0
25.3	Other goods and services from Federal sources 1/	2,556	2,431	2,368	-63
25.4	Operation and maintenance of facilities	0	0	0	0
25.5	Research and development contracts	0	0	0	0
25.7	Operation and maintenance of equipment	659	659	698	39
26.0	Supplies and materials	0	0	0	0
31.0	Equipment	0	0	0	0
41.0	Grants, subsidies, and contributions	0	0	0	0
42.0	Insurance claims and indemnities	28,000	26,200	25,600	-600
	Total	33,140	31,367	30,585	-782
	1/Other goods and services from Federal sources				
	Working Capital Fund	439	417	354	-63
	Services by DOL Agencies	2,117	2,014	2,014	0

² This appropriation is subject to a sequestration reduction pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. All amounts displayed are pre-sequestration levels.

SPECIAL BENEFITS FOR DISABLED COAL MINERS

AUTHORIZING STATUTES

Public Law / Act	Legislation	Statute No. / US Code	Expiration Date
PUB. L. 91-173	Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969, (now called Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977), as amended.	30 U.S.C. 901, et seq.	N/A
PUB. L. 107-275	Black Lung Consolidation of Administrative Responsibility Act, as amended.	30 U.S.C. 801 note	N/A

SPECIAL BENEFITS FOR DISABLED COAL MINERS

APPROPRIATION HISTORY					
(Dollars in Thousands)					
	Budget Estimates to Congress	House Allowance	Senate Allowance	Appropriations	FTE
2017					
Base Appropriation	\$77,319			\$76,952	16
2018					
Base Appropriation	\$69,319	\$69,319		\$68,968	16
2019					
Base Appropriation...1/	\$24,319		\$24,319	\$23,989	16
2020					
Base Appropriation...2/	\$34,970	\$34,970		\$34,677	13
2021					
Base Appropriation	\$54,970			\$54,687	13
2022					
Base Appropriation	\$43,970	\$43,970		\$43,687	13
2023					
Base Appropriation	\$46,281			\$46,744	13
2024					
Base Appropriation	\$29,890		\$29,890	\$29,890	13
2025					
Base Appropriation	\$30,367	\$24,967		\$30,367	13
2026					
Base Appropriation	\$30,485				12

^{1/} This bill was passed by the Senate. It was passed out of the House Subcommittee but was not reported out of the House Committee or by the full House.

^{2/} This bill was passed by the House. It was not taken up by the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee or full Senate Appropriations Committee.

SPECIAL BENEFITS FOR DISABLED COAL MINERS

OVERVIEW

The Black Lung Benefits Act authorizes monetary benefits to coal miners who are totally disabled by pneumoconiosis arising out of coal mine employment, as well as eligible survivors of coal miners. Historically, administration of the Black Lung Benefits Act was split between the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Department of Labor (DOL). Claims filed on or before December 31, 1973, were covered by Part B of the Act and most were administered by SSA (Part B claims filed between July 1 and December 31, 1973, were administered by DOL); claims filed after December 31, 1973, were covered by Part C of the Act and were administered by DOL. Congress transferred responsibility for all Part B claims to DOL, effective October 1, 2003. DOL now administers both Part B and Part C, resulting in fiscal and operational efficiencies and improved service delivery. This account, Special Benefits for Disabled Coal Miners (SBDCM), funds the administration and payment of Part B claims.

The primary activities of the program under Part B are to ensure accurate and timely benefit payments. Service to these beneficiaries focuses on monitoring dependent eligibility and processing changes to the miner's or survivor's entitlement promptly. The program must also validate representative payee requests and accounting reports, as well as implement new Federal financial management requirements, minimize erroneous payments, and increase administrative efficiencies.

SPECIAL BENEFITS FOR DISABLED COAL MINERS

BUDGET AUTHORITY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE³				
(Dollars in Thousands)				
	FY 2024 Enacted	FY 2025 Enacted	FY 2026 Request	Diff. FY 2026 Request / FY 2025 Enacted
Benefit Payments	28,000	26,200	25,600	-600
Administration	5,140	5,167	4,985	-182
Total Budget Authority for the Fiscal Year	33,140	31,367	30,585	-782
Less Funds Advanced in Prior Year	-10,250	-7,000	-6,000	1,000
Current Request for the Fiscal Year	22,890	24,367	24,585	218
New Advances 1st Quarter Next FY	7,000	6,000	5,900	-100
Activity Appropriation	29,890	30,367	30,485	118
FTE	13	13	12	-1

NOTE: FY 2024 reflects actual FTE. Authorized FTE for FY 2024 was 13.

Introduction

The Special Benefits for Disabled Coal Miners (SBDCM) program implements Part B of the Black Lung Benefits Act. Part B provides benefits for coal miners totally disabled by pneumoconiosis, as well as for eligible survivors of coal miners, who filed claims on or before December 31, 1973. Since Part B covers only claims filed before 1974, the number of beneficiaries declines each year. Part B benefits are paid from General Funds for claims filed before July 1, 1973 (special payment rules apply to claims filed between July 1, 1973 and December 31, 1973). Service to these beneficiaries focuses on monitoring dependent eligibility and promptly processing changes to the miner's (or eligible survivor's) entitlement.

Over the last several years, requests for the SBDCM benefits appropriation have been adjusted to increase use of unobligated balances to pay for program obligations. These adjustments do not disrupt the ability of the program to ensure all beneficiaries and eligible dependents receive promised benefits while maintaining a reasonable unobligated balance at the end of the fiscal year. The FY 2026 Budget continues to provide the necessary funding to ensure that beneficiaries and eligible dependents will continue to receive all promised benefits.

³ This appropriation is subject to a sequestration reduction pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. All amounts displayed are pre-sequestration levels.

SPECIAL BENEFITS FOR DISABLED COAL MINERS

The following exhibits reflect recent efforts to manage end of year balances.

Fiscal Year	Budgetary Resources ⁴ (\$ in '000s)	Obligations (\$ in '000s)	Balance available End-of-Year (\$ in '000s)
2020	\$75,110	\$62,589	\$12,521
2021	\$67,450	\$54,877	\$12,573
2022	\$59,443	\$47,866	\$11,547
2023	\$58,681	\$43,112	\$15,569
2024	\$48,709	\$39,657	\$9,052
2025	\$40,419	\$36,424	\$3,995
2026	\$34,580	\$33,231	\$1,349

Fiscal Year	Beneficiaries	Benefit Payments (\$ in '000s)
2020	6,906	\$58,310
2021	5,912	\$50,596
2022	4,986	\$43,541
2023	4,247	\$38,583
2024	3,668	\$34,934
2025	3,090	\$31,257
2026	2,782	\$28,246

Note: Figures for 2020-2024 are end-of-fiscal year totals. Figures for 2025-2026 are end-of-fiscal year estimates based on OWCP's projections.

⁴ This appropriation is subject to a sequestration reduction pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. All amounts displayed are pre-sequestration levels.

SPECIAL BENEFITS FOR DISABLED COAL MINERS

Five-Year Budget Activity History

SPECIAL BENEFITS FOR DISABLED COAL MINERS PART B				
(Dollars in Thousands)				
Fiscal Year	Total Appropriation^{1/}	Benefits^{1/}	Salaries and Expenses	FTE
2021	\$54,687	\$50,000	\$4,687	13
2022	\$46,687	\$42,000	\$4,687	13
2023	\$46,744	\$42,000	\$4,744	13
2024	\$33,140	\$28,000	\$5,140	13
2025	\$31,367	\$26,200	\$5,167	13

^{1/}Includes the Advance Appropriation requested in the prior fiscal year and excludes Advance Appropriation for the next Fiscal Year.

FY 2026

The FY 2026 request level for SBDCM is \$30,585,000, including \$4,985,000 and 12 FTE for program administration. The request for administrative funding is \$182,000 and 1 FTE below the FY 2025 Enacted Level. Of the \$25,600,000 for benefits, \$6,000,000 is an advance appropriation that was requested in FY 2025. In addition, an advance appropriation of \$5,900,000 is requested for the first quarter of FY 2027 to ensure continuity of benefit payments during the transition between fiscal year appropriations. The amount requested for FY 2026 will be sufficient to cover expected benefits expenditures while reducing the unobligated balance carryover.

With this funding SBDCM will manage and support the critical systems, processes, and functions which provide the foundation for OWCP’s Part B benefits maintenance activities and financial management protocols. These resources and FTE levels are necessary to support OWCP’s core mission of timely and accurate processing of benefits for claimants and their families, while supporting program integrity efforts and minimizing improper payments.

FY 2025

Discretionary amounts shown for FY 2025 reflect the FY 2025 full-year Continuing Resolution amounts (P.L. 119-4).

DOL agencies will utilize funding provided through the full-year continuing resolution to realign agency operations with Administration priorities including, but not limited to, executing Executive Order 14158 titled *Establishing and Implementing the President’s “Department of Government Efficiency”* (January 20, 2025); Executive Order 14210 titled *Implementing the President’s “Department of Government Efficiency” Workforce Optimization Initiative* (February 11, 2025); Executive Order 14219 titled *Ensuring Lawful Governance and Implementing the President’s “Department of Government Efficiency” Deregulatory Initiative* (February 19, 2025); Executive Order 14151 titled *Ending Radical And Wasteful Government DEI Programs And Preferencing* (January 20, 2025); and Executive Order 14278 titled *Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future* (April 23, 2025). To the extent any of these Executive Orders are subject to an injunction, DOL will conduct any realignment activities consistent with such injunction(s).

SPECIAL BENEFITS FOR DISABLED COAL MINERS

Workload and Performance Narrative

In FY 2026, OWCP expects to begin the fiscal year servicing an estimated 3,090 Part B beneficiaries and eligible dependents and will end the fiscal year servicing an estimated 2,782 Part B beneficiaries and eligible dependents. This work includes maintaining and supporting the staff and critical systems, processes, and functions, which provide the foundation of OWCP's Part B benefits maintenance activities, including covering pay raises, contract increases, and inflationary costs. These activities support the program's core mission of processing benefits for claimants. Program activities include payment of benefits, monitoring of beneficiary status for the suspension/termination of benefits, reinstatement of benefits, addition/deletion of dependents, conversion of benefits to survivors upon death of miners, resolution of over/under payments, and representative payee determinations. OWCP will also continue efforts to meet new and evolving financial management requirements.

SPECIAL BENEFITS FOR DISABLED COAL MINERS

CHANGES IN FY 2026

(Dollars in Thousands)

Activity Changes

Built-In

To Provide For:

Costs of pay adjustments	\$0
Personnel benefits	0
Employee health benefits	0
Moving allowance	0
Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA)	0
Benefits for former personnel	0
Travel and transportation of persons	0
Transportation of things	0
Rental payments to GSA	0
Communications, utilities, and miscellaneous charges	0
Printing and reproduction	0
Advisory and assistance services	0
Other services from non-Federal sources	0
Working Capital Fund	0
Other Federal sources (DHS Charges)	0
Other goods and services from Federal sources	0
Research & Development Contracts	0
Operation and maintenance of facilities	0
Operation and maintenance of equipment	0
Supplies and materials	0
Equipment	0
Grants, subsidies, and contributions	0
Insurance claims and indemnities	0

Built-Ins Subtotal **\$0**

Net Program **-\$182**

Direct FTE **-1**

	Estimate	FTE
Base	\$5,167	13
Program Increase	\$0	0
Program Decrease	-\$182	-1