

LABOR DAY 2023

INVESTING IN AMERICA'S WORKERS



A Look at the Department of Labor's Work to Expand Equity and Economic Security for All Workers

The Department of Labor is committed to growing our economy from the middle out and bottom up by improving job quality, equity and accessibility for all workers. Since President Biden took office, through August 2023, the economy added more than 13.5 million jobs. Here's a look at some of the announcements, regulatory enhancements and initiatives that are helping create pathways to the middle class and build an economy that works for all.

Expanding our economy through equity and accessibility

Putting workers at the center of President Biden's historic economic agenda by promoting good jobs and policies that expand access for all, especially communities and workers who have historically been left behind:

- Worked in collaboration with federal agency partners to incentivize equity and good jobs in [more than \\$181 billion in competitive grant funding](#).
- Finalized the [Davis-Bacon and Related Acts modernization](#) regulation to help ensure federally funded construction projects create good jobs, and that workers get the fair wages and benefits they deserve.
- Launched the new [High Road to the Middle Class map](#) to spotlight more than 2,400 high road workforce programs that prepare America's infrastructure, clean energy and manufacturing workforce for good jobs.
- Entered into agreements with six federal agencies – including the [Department of the Interior, the EPA](#) and GSA this year – to help improve job quality, promote equity and worker voice, and support economic empowerment for communities across the nation through federal investments under President Biden's Investing in America agenda, from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the CHIPS and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act.
- Launched the [Mega Construction Project Program](#) with 12 Department of Transportation and GSA funded projects to foster equal opportunity in the construction trades workforce on certain large federal construction projects.
- Created a new [contractor portal](#) for covered federal contractors and subcontractors to annually certify whether they have developed and maintained an affirmative action program for each establishment and/or each functional/business unit.
- Issued a final rule to strengthen the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs' ability to [investigate and remedy employment discrimination](#), restore flexibility for agency procedures, and promote efficiency in resolving cases.
- Launched the most comprehensive federal source of childcare prices at the county level in the U.S. The [National Database of Childcare Prices](#) offers childcare price data by childcare provider type and age of children (ages 0-12).

Empowering workers while building a more sustainable labor force

Incorporating job quality and equity throughout policies, initiatives, partnerships and regulations to meet workers where they are:

- Worked with the Department of the Treasury and IRS on [guidance and a notice of proposed rulemaking](#) implementing prevailing wage and apprenticeship requirements in the Inflation Reduction Act.

- Supporting [increased sustainability and growth for Registered Apprentices](#) across states and territories while expanding diversity, especially for in-demand industry sectors like education, clean energy, advanced manufacturing, transportation, cybersecurity, hospitality and others.
- Launched the [Yes, WIOA Can! Initiative](#) to pursue bold and innovative methods to leverage the flexibilities under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to achieve results and drive equitable outcomes.
- Built a nationwide network of 16 communities committed to integrating workforce development and job quality through the [Job Quality Academy](#) to connect historically marginalized populations and communities that disproportionately face employment barriers with good jobs.
- Launched the [Youth Employment Works Strategy and issued a call to action](#) to set a clear vision for young people in the workforce while increasing public and private commitments to youth and young adult career pathways and offering guaranteed paid work experiences.
- Supporting adults reentering the workforce following incarceration in a local jail or state correctional facility by investing over \$100 million in reentry workforce services prior to and post release, including expanding evidence-based strategies in partnership with the Bureau of Prisons to federal correctional institutions across the U.S.
- Funded **more than \$216 million in unemployment insurance Equity Grants** to support historically marginalized workers and promote equitable access to unemployment benefits since the start of the Biden-Harris administration.
- Partnered with the National League of Cities and 16 mayors across the country for the “Good Jobs, Great Cities Academy” convening – an [initiative to increase city-led efforts to train and place workers](#) from historically underserved and underrepresented communities, in quality jobs in high-demand industries such as infrastructure, clean energy and advanced manufacturing.
- Provided more than 108,000 customized technical assistance programs on workplace accommodations to increase inclusive workplaces for workers with disabilities.
- Announced a [\\$1.3 million grant](#) to the State of Illinois and Chicago Women in Trades to support the creation and adoption of equity plans, increase women’s inclusion and equity in construction industry jobs, and help evaluate state and local workforce development programs for diversifying the clean energy and construction workforce.
- Conducted research on the economic situation of Black veterans. The study provided potential avenues on how to support all veterans better connect to VETS programs and services and improve overall program efficacy and effectiveness.

Investing in training, workforce development opportunities to connect employers and workers

Creating pathways to the middle class by providing workers with the information they need to get in-demand skills and find good jobs while engaging employers to attract and retain talent.

- Building on the Biden-Harris administration’s strategy to empower workers by promoting pathways to the middle class through the Apprenticeship Ambassador and [Apprentice Trailblazer Initiative](#) – a proven earn-as-you-learn model that advances the department’s efforts to expand equitable access to good jobs for historically underserved communities.
- Delivering more than \$440 million in investments to strengthen, scale and diversify Registered Apprenticeships across industries, including working with national partners to drive the expansion of apprenticeship across emerging sectors ranging from education, cybersecurity, hospitality, the care economy, advanced manufacturing and others.

- Making \$80 million in new investment available through the [Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs](#) grants to start and scale public-private partnerships that deploy worker-centered sector strategy training programs, prepare and connect workers to the good jobs created by the Investing in America Agenda.
- Invested over \$260 million in community-based organizations and community colleges across the country to provide vulnerable and underserved communities workforce training and supportive services aligned to good jobs.
- Announced a [\\$20 million cooperative agreement with TradesFutures](#), in partnership with the National Urban League, to advance equitable pathways into the construction sector.
- Awarded [more than \\$78 million](#) to expand the nursing workforce across 17 states to build quality pathways for nursing professionals and strengthen the care economy.
- Announced more than [\\$12.7 million in Susan Harwood Training grants](#) to help train workers and employers in small businesses; industries with high injury, illness and fatality rates; and underserved workers who have limited English proficiency or are temporary workers.
- Served nearly 17,000 veterans experiencing or at-risk of homelessness through the [Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program](#).
- Provided [vocational training](#) to approximately 150,00 servicemembers separating from the military.

Promoting safe and equitable workplaces by upholding the law

Holding employers accountable for their responsibility to all workers under the law, enforcing workers' rights and promote policies that improve workers' health, safety and economic security:

- Issued a [notice of proposed rulemaking](#) that would restore and extend overtime protections for 3.6 million salaried white-collar workers.
- Increased enforcement where workers are exposed to heat hazards and issued a [heat hazard alert](#) to remind employers of their obligation to protect workers against heat illness or injury in outdoor and indoor workplaces. The department also initiated the first-ever rulemaking process to protect workers from heat hazards across the country.
- Vigorously enforcing federal child labor laws through a robust [national strategic enforcement initiative](#) that leverages all available enforcement tools, including penalties, injunctions, stopping the movement of goods made with child labor, and criminal referrals where warranted.
- Issued [public guidance](#) setting forth the Wage and Hour Division's authority to prohibit the shipment of goods produced in violation of child labor laws. This Field Assistance Bulletin about the Hot Goods provisions of Fair Labor Standards Act will help protect children from exploitive child labor.
- Combating and preventing exploitative child labor through a [DOL-led Interagency Taskforce to Combat Child Labor Exploitation](#) that furthers collaboration and improves information-sharing among federal agencies and has resulted in significant cross-training, outreach and education efforts to advance the health, education and well-being of children in the U.S.
- Announced a [proposal to amend current federal standards](#) to better protect the nation's miners from health hazards related to exposure to respirable crystalline silica, known as silica dust.
- Issued a final rule to increase [transparency of injury and illness data in high-hazard industries](#) that will improve OSHA's ability to track trends and use strategic enforcement, while helping workers and employers make more informed decisions about the safety and health of their workplace.

- Published a [notice of proposed rulemaking to help employers and workers](#) determine whether a worker is an employee or an independent contractor under the Fair Labor Standards Act in order to provide guidance on classifying workers and combat employee misclassification.
- Announced a notice of proposed rulemaking to [clarify the personal protective equipment standard](#) and ensure construction industry workers have properly fitting PPE to protect them from occupational hazards.
- The inaugural [MSHA Stand Down to Save Lives Day](#) reached more than 35,000 people in the mining industry across the country, as part of the agency's ongoing effort to reduce fatalities, serious accidents and injuries in the mining industry.
- Issued a [notice of proposed rulemaking](#) to improve workplace safety by clarifying that workers may authorize a third-party to act as their representative to OSHA compliance officers during workplace inspections.
- Expanded authority to [OSHA to issue certifications](#) in support of applications for U nonimmigrant status and T nonimmigrant status visas to protect vulnerable workers who speak up about unsafe working conditions.
- Investigated 1,009 potential violations of the Uniformed Servicemember Employment and Re-employment Rights Act, which protect veterans and servicemembers from workplace discrimination. Of those cases, the Veterans' Employment and Training Service mediated the closure of 976 of those cases, with mutual terms between the claimant and employer, which avoided potential legal action.
- Issued a [notice of proposed rulemaking](#) to require increased collateral from self-insured coal mine operators to protect miners suffering total disability due to pneumoconiosis, or their surviving family members, from the impact of operator bankruptcies.

Ensuring all workers receive the pay, quality benefits and retirement security they have earned

Supporting workers by recovering wages and benefits they are owed, protecting workers' rights, and making benefit services more accessible and user-friendly:

- Under the Biden-Harris administration, the Wage and Hour Division, Employee Benefits Security Administration and Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs have **recovered more than \$4.8 billion for workers and their families:**
 - WHD investigations have **recovered \$677 million in back wages for more than 433,000 workers, including more than \$308 million to workers in low-wage, high violation industries.**
 - EBSA has **recovered more than \$4.2 billion for employment benefit plans, participants and beneficiaries.**
 - OFCCP has **recovered more than \$21 million for workers who were illegally denied jobs, raises or promotions.**
- Connected more than 6 million marginalized and underserved women with information and assistance to help them access their workplace rights and benefits through [Fostering Access, Rights and Equity grants](#).
- Introduced a [proposed rule](#) with the Departments of Health and Human Services and Treasury to better ensure people seeking coverage for mental health and substance use disorder care can access treatment as easily as those seeking coverage for medical treatments.
- Launched the [Mental Health at Work](#) initiative, including a new [PSA](#) and [webpage](#), to promote tools and resources that advance wellness in the workforce by reducing stigma and increasing awareness of mental health and wellbeing within workplaces; promoting best practices and compliance by employers; and promoting mental health equity and access, especially for marginalized and vulnerable populations.

- Corrected mental health parity violations for 4 million participants and beneficiaries in more than 39,000 plans.
- Issued a [final rule](#) that allows over 150 million workers, retirees and their families the ability to consider environmental, social and governance factors when investing their retirement savings.
- Streamlined and strengthened medical billing practices to grow the number of doctors available to treat injured or ill federal workers by 15% since the start of fiscal year 2023.
- Improved the process for federal firefighters who get sick or injured on the job to get workers' compensation benefits and receive medical treatment for their injuries.
- Worked with the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation to ensure more than 3 million workers and their families receive the pensions they have earned.
- Protected working families by launching a nationwide [Power to Pump initiative](#) to educate workers and employers about expanded protections to pump at work under the PUMP Act.
- Commemorated the [30th anniversary of the Family and Medical Leave Act](#) through increased outreach, events, storytelling and [new resources](#), including a [hub for family caregivers](#).
- Developed a [maternal health event series and resource hub](#) with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Empowering workers to organize and successfully bargain with their employers

Supporting worker organizing and successful labor-management collaboration to grow our economy:

- Re-launched the [Worker Organizing Resource and Knowledge Center](#) – a one-stop shop for information and resources on unions and collective bargaining for workers, unions, employers, policymakers and advocates to support worker organizing and successful labor-management collaboration.
- Updated the [Know Your Rights Toolkit](#) to increase awareness among workers of their federally protected rights to organize and collectively bargain with employers.
- Developed a [resource guide on project labor agreements](#) that illustrates how they are effective tools to ensure timely completion of projects at or under budget; provide employers with a reliable source of highly skilled workers; increase diversity and support equitable workforce development; and improve worker health and safety on the job.
- Announced a final revision [updating a federal form that promotes labor-management transparency](#) by requiring employers who make expenditures or enter into agreements with consultants to engage in persuader activities, or surveillance activities in connection with a labor dispute to disclose their status as a federal contractor or subcontractor.