



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

The Department of Labor (DOL) is responsible for protecting the health, safety, wages, and economic security of workers and retirees. The President's 2024 Budget for DOL supports: building the skills of America's workers; protecting workers' rights and benefits, health and safety, and wages; strengthening the integrity and accessibility of the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program; and creating good, middle-class jobs that are safe and equitable, provide fair wages and benefits, empower workers, and offer opportunities for advancement.

The Budget requests \$15.1 billion in discretionary budget authority for 2024, a \$1.5 billion or 11-percent increase from the 2023 enacted level.

The President's 2024 Budget:

- **Empowers and Protects Workers.** Workers power America's economic prosperity, and to ensure workers are treated with dignity and respect in the workplace, the Budget invests \$2.3 billion, an increase of \$430 million above the 2023 enacted level, in the Department's worker protection agencies. The Budget would enable DOL to protect workers' wages and benefits, combat exploitative child labor, address the misclassification of workers as independent contractors, and improve workplace health and safety. The Budget also provides resources to support vigorous enforcement of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, especially where employers have retaliated against or otherwise penalized employees for taking federally protected leave from work. The Budget also ensures fair treatment for millions of workers by providing resources to oversee and enforce the equal employment obligations of Federal contractors, including protections against discrimination based on race, sex, disability, gender identity, and sexual orientation.
- **Expands Penalties when Employers Violate Workers' Rights to Organize, Receive Fair Wages, and Have a Safe and Healthy Workplace Free from Discrimination.** Employers often receive only a slap on the wrist—at most—when they fire or retaliate against workers for exercising their right to organize and collectively bargain, steal wages from workers, force workers to work in unsafe conditions, exploit children, or otherwise flagrantly violate the Nation's labor laws. To deter employers from violating workers' rights, ensure those who do violate their rights are held accountable, and level the playing field for responsible employers, the Budget also proposes instituting and meaningfully increasing penalties at DOL, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the National Labor Relations Board for employers that violate workplace safety, health, wage and hour, child labor, equal opportunity, and labor organizing rules.
- **Calls for Paid Sick Leave for All Workers.** Millions of workers in America have to choose between a needed paycheck—or even a job—and taking care of a family member or

themselves when they are sick. Workers without paid sick days are more likely to go to work when sick, send their child to school when sick, and do without the healthcare they need to get better. Paid sick days are not only good for workers and families—they are also good for business, leading to lower employee turnover and increased productivity, and reducing the spread of contagious diseases. The President calls on the Congress to require employers to provide seven job-protected paid sick days each year to all workers, and ensure that employers cannot penalize workers for taking time off to address their health needs, or the health needs of their families, or to seek safety from domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

- **Expands Access to Paid Family and Medical Leave.** The vast majority of America's workers do not have access to paid family leave, including three out of four private sector workers. Among the lowest-paid workers, who are predominately women and workers of color, 92 percent have no access to paid family leave through their employers. As many as one in five retirees leave the workforce earlier than planned to care for an ill family member, which negatively impacts families as well as the Nation's labor supply and productivity. The Budget proposes to establish a national, comprehensive paid family and medical leave program administered by the Social Security Administration to ensure that all workers can take the time they need to: bond with a new child; care for a seriously ill loved one; heal from their own serious illness; address circumstances arising from a loved one's military deployment; find safety from domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; or grieve the death of a loved one. The Budget also includes \$10 million for DOL's Women's Bureau to help States expand access to paid leave benefits, including through grants to support States in implementing new paid leave programs and through the creation of a Technical Assistance Hub to share best practices among States.
- **Expands Workforce Training that Provides Pathways to Good Jobs.** The President's historic legislative accomplishments are rebuilding U.S. infrastructure, supporting clean energy, and boosting American manufacturing while creating millions of high-quality jobs. The Budget invests in effective, evidence-based training models that would ensure all workers, particularly women, workers of color, those living in rural areas, workers with disabilities, and others underrepresented in growing fields, have the skills they need to compete for and fill these and other jobs. The Budget provides \$200 million for a new Sectoral Employment through Career Training for Occupational Readiness (SECTOR) program, which would support the development and expansion of public-private partnerships among employers, education and training providers, and community-based groups to equitably deliver high-quality training focused on growing industries. SECTOR's approach is based on decades of research showing that when employers take a leading role in the design and implementation of training, workers—especially underserved workers—gain access to high-quality programs that lead directly to good, in-demand jobs.
- **Expands Access to Registered Apprenticeships.** The Budget increases support for Registered Apprenticeship, an evidence-based earn-and-learn model that is a critical tool for training future workforces in the construction, clean energy, semiconductor, transportation and logistics, education, and other growing and in-demand industries. The Budget invests \$335 million, a \$50 million increase above the 2023 enacted level, to expand Registered Apprenticeship opportunities in these high-growth fields while increasing the number of workers from historically underrepresented groups, including people of color and women, who participate in Registered Apprenticeships.
- **Supports Community Colleges in Providing High-Quality Training.** The Budget recognizes the critical role that community colleges play in providing accessible, affordable, and high-quality training. The Budget invests \$100 million, a \$35 million increase above the

2023 enacted level, to build community colleges' capacity to work with the public workforce development system and employers to design and deliver high-quality training programs in communities across the Nation.

- **Expands Employment Protections for Military Spouses.** Military families make significant sacrifices on behalf of the Nation, including overcoming the many challenges that spouses of active-duty service and reserve members experience in finding and retaining good jobs. A Department of Defense survey found that 33 percent of military families had experienced a permanent change in location within the last 12 months. Spouses of military servicemembers often face discrimination from current and prospective employers due to the frequent and unpredictable nature of deployment and relocations. The Budget addresses these challenges by expanding anti-discrimination and reemployment protections to spouses of all active duty and reserve members, which would allow them to more easily find and keep good jobs.
- **Modernizes, Protects, and Strengthens UI.** The UI program provides a critical safety net for workers who have lost a job through no fault of their own and helps protect the economy as a whole from further damage during downturns. UI was critical in helping millions of Americans through unexpected job losses during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the pandemic also exposed vulnerabilities in the program. The Budget invests \$3.7 billion, an increase of \$522 million above the 2023 enacted level, to modernize, protect, and strengthen the UI program. This includes investments aimed at tackling fraud, including funding to support more robust identity verification for UI applicants, help States develop and test fraud-prevention tools and strategies, and allow the DOL Office of Inspector General to increase its investigations into fraud rings targeting the UI program. In addition, the Budget proposes a comprehensive legislative package of program integrity proposals designed to provide States with new tools and resources to combat UI fraud and improper payments while ensuring equity and accessibility for all claimants. The Budget also includes principles to guide future efforts to reform the UI system, including improving benefit levels and access, scaling UI benefits automatically during recessions, expanding eligibility to reflect the modern labor force, improving State and Federal solvency through more equitable and progressive financing, expanding reemployment services, and further safeguarding the program from fraud.
- **Supports Legacy Energy Communities.** To address changes in the energy economy, the Budget continues to invest in strategic planning, partnership development, and training and reemployment activities for displaced workers. The Budget provides \$20 million to support DOL's role in the multi-agency Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (also known as POWER+) Initiative, which aims to assist displaced workers and transform local economies and communities transitioning away from fossil fuel production to new, sustainable industries. The Budget also includes \$67 million for Workforce Opportunities for Rural Communities. This program—administered in partnership with the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Delta Regional Authority, and the Northern Border Regional Commission—aims to help Appalachian, Delta, and Northern Border communities develop local and regional workforce development strategies that promote long-term economic stability and opportunities for workers, especially those connected to the energy industry. In addition, the Budget provides \$20 million for DOL to partner with AmeriCorps and other agencies to establish a Civilian Climate Corps program to help communities address the climate crisis by creating service opportunities and job training programs in emerging industries.
- **Strengthens Mental Health Parity Protections.** The Budget requires all health plans to cover mental health and substance use disorder benefits, ensures that plans have an adequate network of behavioral health providers, and improves DOL's ability to enforce the law. In

addition, the Budget includes \$275 million over 10 years to increase the Department's capacity to ensure that large group market health plans and issuers comply with mental health and substance use disorder requirements, and expand the Agency's capacity to take action against plans and issuers that do not comply.