

DOL seeks bigger 2017 budget for wage-and-hour enforcement

The Obama administration wants more money for wage-and-hour enforcement next year, even as it asks for less funding overall for the Department of Labor.

The administration's final budget request—for fiscal year 2017, which begins Oct. 1—seeks \$12.8 billion to fund the DOL next year, less than the \$13.2 billion it asked for last year. Congress wound up granting the department \$12.2 billion.

The DOL's FY2017 budget, however, proposes spending \$277 million on Wage and Hour Division enforcement activities. That's \$50 million more than Congress granted in 2016.

Some of that will surely go to implementation and enforcement of a new final rule—due this year—for paying overtime to white-collar employees. Also highlighted in the WHD 2017 budget: plans to focus on misclassification of employees as independent contractors.

Other notable 2017 initiatives:

More than \$2 billion for a Paid-Leave Partnership Initiative to assist up to five states to launch paid-leave programs. Some of that would fund development of paid family and medical leave programs at the state level.

More than \$205 million for the Employee Benefits Security Administration to bolster employer-based retirement plans. EBSA also proposes an additional \$100 million to finance pilots to test new ways of making retirement benefits more accessible and portable for workers.

A cost-neutral suite of reforms to modernize and improve the Unemployment Insurance program so more workers have access to benefits if they lose a job.

Online resource: Find a summary of the DOL's 2017 budget request at dol.gov/general/budget.