

## **DOL Funding Slashed by 21 Percent Under President's Proposed Budget**

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President Trump released his initial budget outline March 16, 2017. It includes \$9.6 billion for the Department of Labor (DOL), a reduction of \$2.5 billion from its 2017 funding level.

The impact of a cut of more than 20% of the DOL's budget will necessarily mean that the agency will have to change its focus. What will get pared down or even eliminated as a consequence of this budget cut (if approved) is unclear, although it is likely that the agency's rulemaking and enforcement efforts will likely take a hit. The administration wants to reduce jobless benefits costs, eliminate the Bureau of International Labor Affairs' grant funding, and close at least some Job Corps centers. The White House also said it would scrap certain "ineffective, duplicative, and peripheral" DOL job-training grants.

The White House Office of Management and Budget proposal lists several DOL grant programs targeted for cuts, but otherwise says little about how the President plans to cut back the agency charged with administering many of the nation's labor laws. In the absence of specifics, one question is whether in addition to program cuts, will the agency's staff also be cut, and if so, by how many employees? The plan at this time is vague on details about specific sub-agencies, which is an indication that the White House may be waiting for advice from a confirmed labor secretary. The confirmation hearing for President Trump labor nominee Alexander Acosta, which was set for March 15, 2017, was pushed back a week because the chairman of the committee overseeing his confirmation was traveling with the President to a rally in Nashville on that date. Mr. Acosta will now appear before the committee on March 22, 2017.

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