

Fact Sheet: EBSA Restores Nearly \$1.4 Billion to Employee Benefit Plans, Participants, and Beneficiaries

The U.S. Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) recovered \$1.384 billion in direct payment to plans, participants, and beneficiaries in FY 2024. These recoveries — along with the equally important non-monetary results we achieved — demonstrate a strong, fair, and effective program that protects the benefits of America's workers and retirees.

Nearly **\$1.4 billion** recovered in FY 2024

\$741.9 million	from enforcement actions	\$544.1 million	from informal complaint resolution
\$53.5 million	from the Abandoned Plan Program	\$44.3 million	from the Voluntary Fiduciary Correction Program

The majority of EBSA's monetary recoveries were the result of enforcement actions and informal complaint resolution. But we also made a big difference for current and future participants and beneficiaries by obtaining important non-monetary results. This includes the elimination of illegal plan provisions, improved fiduciary governance, and increased access to mental health benefits.

EBSA is responsible for ensuring the integrity of the private employee benefit plan system in the United States through enforcement of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA). We oversee:

- approximately **2.6 million health plans**,
- **801,000 private pension plans**, and
- **514,000 other welfare benefit plans**.

These ERISA-covered plans cover **156 million workers, retirees, and dependents** who participate in private sector pension and welfare plans that hold an estimated \$14 trillion in assets.

Real People. Real Impact.

America's workers, retirees, and their families are feeling the impact of EBSA's work in life-changing ways.

5-Year-Old Receives Crucial Medication After Brain Tumor

A 5-year-old girl had survived a brain tumor. She was dependent on growth hormone therapy, but her treatment was jeopardized when her prescribed medications became unavailable. An alternative medication was not listed on the employer's health plan formulary, and other possible options were all out of stock. An EBSA Benefits Advisor worked with the parents, the pharmacy benefits manager, and a specialty pharmacy, who agreed to expedite the approval process for the new medication prescribed by the child's doctor.

Spanish-Speaking Participant Receives \$139K in Benefits

As part of the missing participant program, an EBSA Benefits Advisor worked with an 84-year-old Spanish-speaking participant who did not know he was entitled to benefits. After working with EBSA and receiving information in Spanish, the participant was awarded a monthly benefit of \$750.83 and a retroactive payment dating back to 2011 totaling \$139,001.28.

Plan Covers Autism Treatment

EBSA helped participants in a self-funded union plan receive coverage for applied behavioral analysis (ABA) therapy to treat autism. Investigators found that the plan covered autism but illegally excluded ABA therapy, which resulted in over \$88,000 in denied claims for one participant who continued their course of ABA therapy despite claim denials by the plan.

After EBSA's investigation, the plan removed the exclusion and re-adjudicated over 150 claims, spanning more than two years of services.

Over \$500K For Missing Participants

A regional office helped missing participants in a profit-sharing defined contribution plan recover their benefits. Thanks to EBSA's efforts, the company improved its policies and engaged in an enhanced lost participant search. Afterward, 12 participants received benefits totaling \$517,455, and 50 others have started the process of receiving benefits.

Breast Cancer Patient Gets Needed Supplies

A breast cancer patient who was facing significant hurdles in obtaining mastectomy supplies contacted EBSA after unsuccessful attempts to clarify her benefits and locate suppliers.

A Benefits Advisor contacted the patient's employer, who confirmed the patient was eligible for 100 percent coverage of her mastectomy supplies with no deductible or co-pay. The employer provided a list of local network service providers that offered the necessary supplies, but the patient was also granted an out-of-network gap exception, allowing her to obtain medical supplies from her preferred provider.

By the Numbers: Fast Facts

Investigations Results

Civil Investigations

Total investigations closed	729
Total investigations closed with results	514 (71%)
Cases referred for litigation	53

Criminal Investigations

Total investigations closed	177
Number of guilty pleas or convictions	161
Number of individuals indicted	68

Civil Investigation Recoveries

Terminated vested participant benefit payments	\$432.6 million
All other investigations	\$309.3 million
Total recovered from investigations	\$741.9 million

Informal Complaint Resolutions

Total inquiries from participants and beneficiaries	199,094
Investigations opened from inquiry referrals	294
Total recovered from informal complaint resolution	\$544.1 million

Outreach, Education, and Assistance

Dislocated worker rapid response sessions	762
Congressional district office briefings	205
Compliance assistance activities	383
Other participant assistance and public awareness activities	807
Total outreach events	2,157
Number of events for underserved communities	1,002

Correction Programs

VFCP applications received	1,037
DFVCP filings received	20,009

Publications & Website

Publications distributed	194,957
Website visitors	2.96 million

By the Numbers: In Detail

Nearly **\$742 Million** Recovered in Investigations

In FY 2024, EBSA closed 729 civil investigations. Of those, 514 cases (71 percent) produced monetary results for plans or other corrective action, for a total of \$741.9 million recovered.

Recoveries for terminated vested participants (individuals who are no longer working for an employer but are still entitled to benefits from their retirement plan) played a large role in these results. EBSA's enforcement program helped 9,170 terminated vested participants in defined benefit pension plans collect benefits of \$432.6 million owed to them.¹

Non-Monetary Results

EBSA's enforcement program also obtains non-monetary corrections and injunctive relief in civil cases that result in increased protections for plan assets or benefits. In FY 2024, we obtained 324 non-monetary civil corrections, including:

- removing 12 fiduciaries,
- barring 27 individuals from serving as fiduciaries,
- appointing 23 independent fiduciaries,
- improving missing participant procedures for 48 plans, and
- 59 global corrections involving service providers for multiple ERISA-covered health plans.

EBSA often pursues voluntary compliance to correct violations and restore losses to employee benefit plans. However, in cases where those efforts have failed or are inappropriate, EBSA forwards a recommendation to the Solicitor of Labor to initiate litigation. Together, we determine which cases are appropriate to pursue.

In FY 2024, EBSA referred 53 cases for litigation. However, even after referral to the solicitor, we can often resolve the claims for monetary relief without filing suit.

Over **\$544 Million** Restored to Workers through Informal Complaint Resolution

When workers experience a problem with an employee benefit plan, they can directly contact an EBSA Benefits Advisor for assistance. In FY 2024, EBSA's Benefits Advisors closed more than 199,000 inquiries and recovered \$544.1 million in benefits on behalf of workers and their families through informal resolution of individual complaints. Many of the inquiries came

¹ These results represent a combination of the present values of lifetime annuity payments or cash-out lump-sum balance payments, plus interest on distributions paid as either retroactive lump sums or included in actuarially adjusted future annuity amounts.

through via EBSA's toll-free number, 1-866-444-EBSA (3272), or askebsa.dol.gov.

These inquiries sometimes lead to enforcement actions if there are repeated complaints about a particular plan, employer, or service provider, or if there is information indicating an ERISA violation. In FY 2024, EBSA opened 294 new investigations from Benefits Advisor referrals.

68 People Indicted and 161 People Plead Guilty or Convicted for Crimes Related to Employee Benefit Plans

EBSA is also responsible for investigating potential violations of ERISA's criminal provisions and the provisions of Title 18 of the United States Code that relate to employee benefit plans. We generally conduct these investigations with other federal law enforcement agencies and the jurisdiction's United States Attorney or in consultation with the appropriate state or local law enforcement authority.

In FY 2024, EBSA's criminal investigations led to the indictment of 68 people and convictions or guilty pleas of 161 people—including plan officials, corporate officers, and service providers—for offenses related to employee benefit plans. 177 criminal investigations were closed during the fiscal year.

\$53.5 Million Distributed to Participants Through Abandoned Plan Program

The Abandoned Plan Program facilitates the termination of individual account pension plans that have been abandoned by their sponsoring employers. It also helps distribute these plans' benefits.

During FY 2024, EBSA received 1,710 applications from Qualified Termination Administrators and closed 1,322 applications with terminations approved. In total, \$53.5 million was distributed directly to participants as a result.²

Over 21,000 Compliance Assistance Program Applications & Filings

EBSA's Voluntary Fiduciary Correction Program (VFCP) and Delinquent Filer Voluntary Compliance Program (DFVCP) encourage the correction of ERISA violations by providing significant incentives for fiduciaries and others to self-correct.

The VFCP allows plan officials who have identified certain ERISA violations to remedy the breaches and voluntarily report the violations to EBSA without becoming the subject of an

² In addition to the \$53.5 million in distributions from voluntary applications by Qualified Termination Administrators, EBSA also obtained \$18.9 million in distributions for participants through enforcement efforts to resolve abandoned plans.

enforcement action. In FY 2024, EBSA processed 1,162 applications with \$44.3 million in corrections.

The DFVCP encourages plan administrators to bring their plans into compliance with ERISA's filing requirements. EBSA received 20,009 annual reports through this program in FY 2024. Additionally, the EFAST2 Help Desk handled over 15,000 filer inquiries to help filers meet their reporting obligations.

More Than 2,150 Education and Outreach Events Held, Media Efforts Reach 33 Million

EBSA conducts outreach and education events for workers, retirees, employers, plan officials, and members of Congress. These nationwide activities include helping dislocated workers who are facing job loss, educating employers about their ERISA obligations, explaining our programs to congressional staff so they can better serve their constituents, and providing workers with information on their rights under the law.

In FY 2024, EBSA held 2,157 outreach events. While most of these events were conducted in English, EBSA also conducted 240 events in Spanish and additional events in Chinese, Haitian Creole, Polish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

EBSA also delivered 39 media (newspaper, radio, and television) interviews, reaching an audience of 33,079,024 people.

Nearly 3 Million People Visit EBSA's Website, Over 190,000 Publications Distributed

EBSA also reaches workers, retirees, employers, plan service providers, and the public through its printed materials and website www.dol.gov/agencies/ebsa. Publications in English, Spanish, Arabic, Simplified and Traditional Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Tagalog, and Vietnamese are available through EBSA's toll-free number and online. We distributed 194,957 of these publications in FY 2024.

EBSA website visitors can learn about our programs, laws, regulations, and more. It features resources for workers and families as well as for plans, plan sponsors, service providers, researchers, and more. In FY 2024, the website had 2.96 million visitors.

This fact sheet has been developed by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Washington, DC, 20210. It is available in alternate format upon request: Voice telephone: (202) 693-8664; TTY: (202) 501-3911. In addition, the information in this fact sheet constitutes a small entity compliance guide for purposes of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996.³

³ Updated as of 12/20/2024.