

Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP)

<http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/workcomp/>

OWCP's Mission: OWCP protects the interests of workers who are injured or become ill on the job, their families and their employers by making timely, appropriate, and accurate decisions on claims, providing prompt payment of benefits and opportunities for injured workers to return to gainful work as early as is feasible.

OWCP's Strategic Goals for the Future:

Over the next five years, over one million workers or their survivors will rely on OWCP to provide benefits for work injury or illness. During this period, we will pay over \$22.5 billion dollars in compensation and wage loss, medical, and rehabilitation benefits. To meet these requirements, OWCP will improve our operations and management by achieving five strategic goals:

1. Improve claims review, adjudication, issue resolution and payments
2. Enhance recovery, rehabilitation and employment services
3. Promote collaboration and outreach with stakeholders and customer groups
4. Create and sustain a high performing workforce
5. Improve agency-wide operations, governance, and infrastructure

OWCP Programs: OWCP administers four federal workers' compensation programs providing benefits for work-related injuries and illnesses for federal employees and certain other designated employee groups and responsibly manages the benefit funds authorized for these purposes. As a result of job-related injury or illness, workers covered by the OWCP programs are faced with potentially devastating economic, health, and other personal costs that arise from:

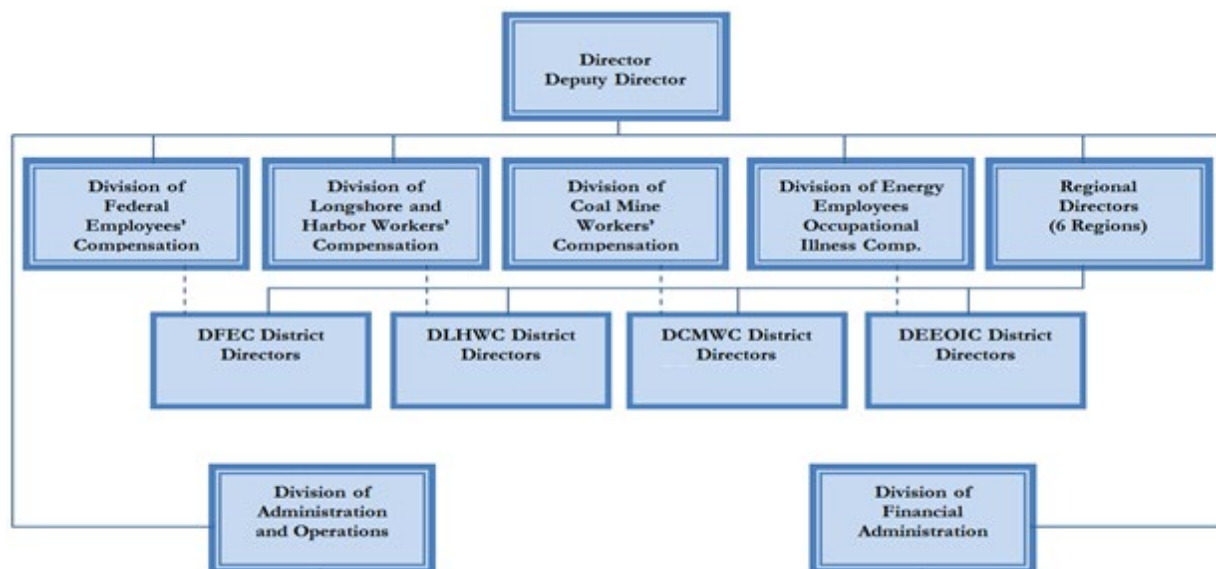
- * Interruption of income while out of work;
- * Loss of income if permanently disabled and unable to work or, for survivors, due to death of the employee;
- * Reduced capacity to find new employment;
- * Temporary or permanent reduced capacity to return to work;
- * Temporary or permanent dislocation from prior employment; and
- * Need for ongoing medical care.

The Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) program celebrated its 100th anniversary last year. Established in 1916, the program provides wage-loss compensation, medical treatment, return-to-work assistance and vocational rehabilitation to injured federal government civilian employees and to certain other designated groups. In fiscal year (FY) 2016, the FECA program processed over 109,000 new claims and services over 42,000 cases receiving compensation benefits for longer term or permanent disabilities. As a result of FECA's highly effective case management activities, nearly 89.5 percent of federal employees with serious injuries return to work within two years of their injury. In FY 2016, FECA paid over \$3.2 billion in medical care benefits and compensation.

The Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act (Longshore) provides similar benefits to injured private sector workers engaged in certain maritime and related employment. This includes domestic and foreign contract personnel who support the U.S. government overseas covered under the Defense Base Act (DBA). The Longshore program received over 24,000 new lost-time injury claims in FY16, including more than 6,000 DBA claims. Compensation and medical benefits paid by private insurers and employers totaled nearly \$1.3 billion in calendar year 2015 (most recent total available). Over the past five years, the program facilitated the delivery of wage replacement compensation, medical treatment, and vocational rehabilitation benefits to nearly 73,000 injured private sector workers and death benefits to their survivors.

The Black Lung Benefits Act (Black Lung) program provides or ensures the delivery of monetary compensation and medical benefits to totally disabled miners suffering from coal mine pneumoconiosis (aka “black lung disease”) stemming from mine employment, and monetary benefits to their dependent survivors. In FY 2016, the Black Lung program provided compensation and medical benefits to more than 32,000 recipients under Part B and Part C, for a combined annual total of \$276 million. Last year, nearly 7,500 claims were filed for Black Lung benefits, including over 3,100 refiled claims. The program provided monthly compensation and ongoing medical treatment benefits to about 21,000 recipients under Part C. The program also monitored cash and medical treatment benefits disbursed by coal mine operators to over 4,700 recipients under Part C.

The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Act (Energy) was enacted in 2001. The Energy program provides compensation and medical benefits to employees or survivors of employees of the Department of Energy (DOE) and its contractors or subcontractors, diagnosed with cancer and other occupational illnesses due to exposure to radiation or toxic substances. Under Part B, nuclear energy workers and their survivors submitted nearly 157,000 claims. Since its inception, the Energy program paid Part B compensation benefit payments of more than \$6.0 billion over 71,000 claims. The program over 127,000 claims under Part E and paid compensation benefit payments totaling more than \$3.8 billion on almost 34,000 claims. Under Part B and E, the Energy program paid over \$3.0 billion in medical benefits.



OWCP Operations and Structure: OWCP’s programs are carried out by the over 1,500 federal employees in the National Office and six regions, with direct support from thousands of full and part-time contract workers, including nurses and rehabilitation counselors, doctors, medical bill processing support, Information Technology (IT) development and support, and others. The National Office includes the OWCP Director, Deputy Director, and the Directors for each of the four workers’ compensation program divisions and the divisions of Financial Administration (DFA) and Administrative Operations (DAO). DFA provides strategic planning, performance management, budget formulation, and budget execution processes and DAO provides human resources, facility management, medical policy, and IT capital planning, support, and technical direction to all OWCP. Six OWCP Regional Directors in New York, Philadelphia, Jacksonville, Chicago, Dallas, and San Francisco, manage District Office operations. The FECA program has 12 district offices; Longshore has nine; Black Lung eight; and the Energy program four.