FY 2024 CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET JUSTIFICATION FEDERAL PROGRAMS FOR WORKERS' COMPENSATION SALARIES AND EXPENSES

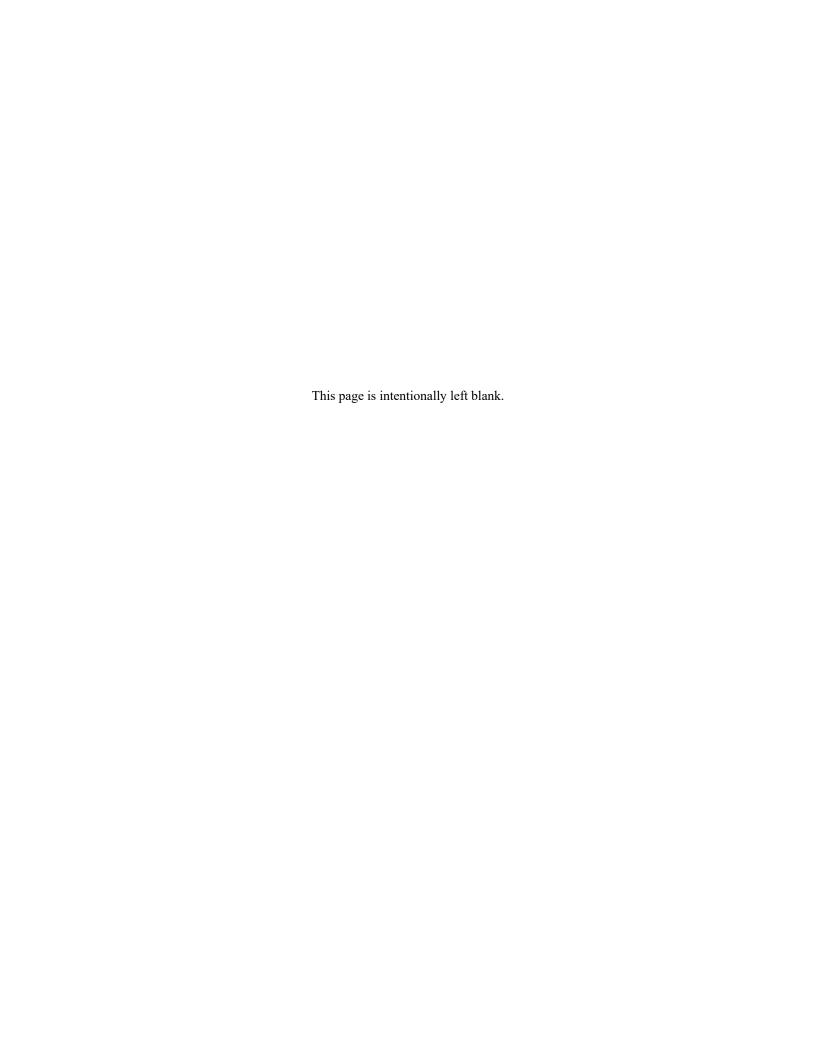
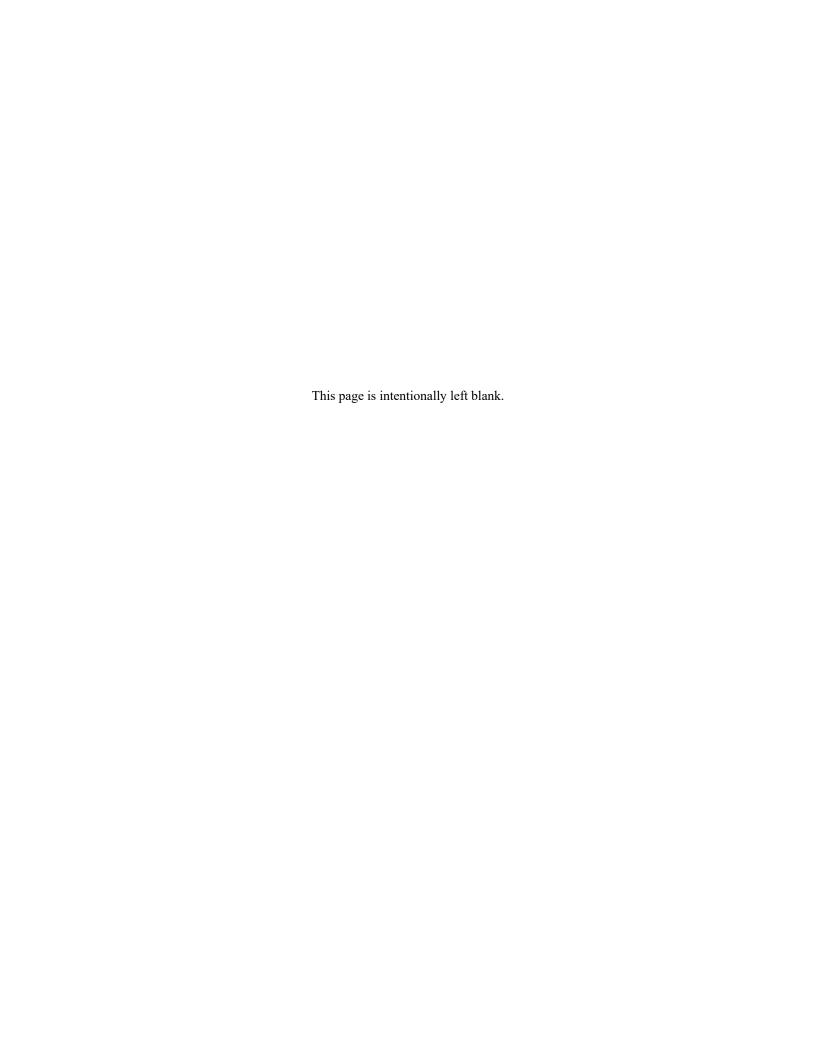


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APPROPRIATION LANGUAGE

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses for the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, [\$120,500,000] \$149,675,000, together with [\$2,205,000] \$2,271,000 which [may be expended] shall be available from the Special Fund in accordance with sections 39(c), 44(d), and 44(j) of the Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act: Provided, That such amounts shall remain available through September 30, 2025. (Department of Labor Appropriations Act, 2023.)

EXPLANATION OF LANGUAGE CHANGE

The Department requests two-year availability to increase flexibility for program execution. The annual uncertainty in the appropriations timing results in delayed hiring and rushed execution of contracts. The multi-year availability would reduce the impact of short-term continuing resolutions at no cost to the annual appropriations bill. This change would also enhance staff oversight of the programs they are administering.

AMOUNTS		ABLE FOR s in Thousands		GATION		
	F	Y 2022 ed Enacted]	FY 2023 ised Enacted		Y 2024 Request
	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount
A. Appropriation	657	\$117,924	668	\$120,500	817	\$149,675
A.1) Subtotal Appropriation (adjusted)	657	\$117,924	668	\$120,500	817	\$149,675
Offsetting Collections From:						
Black Lung Disability Trust Fund	152	\$41,464	150	\$42,194	152	\$44,059
Sequestration reduction Pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985	0	-\$2,363	0	-\$2,405	0	\$0
Longshore Trust	7	\$2,205	7	\$2,205	7	\$2,271
A.1) Subtotal Trust Funds	159	\$41,306	157	\$41,994	159	\$46,330
Unexpired Unobligated Balances Carried Forward from Prior Year - American Rescue Plan Act Supplemental	60	\$19,511	0	\$2,252	0	\$0
B. Gross Budget Authority	876	\$178,741	825	\$164,746	976	\$196,005
Offsetting Collections to:	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Black Lung Disability Trust Fund	-152	-\$39,101	-150	-\$39,789	-152	-\$44,059
Longshore Trust	-7	-\$2,205	-7	-\$2,205	-7	-\$2,271
B.1) Subtotal Trust Funds	-159	-\$41,306	-157	-\$41,994	-159	-\$46,330
C. Budget Authority Before Committee	657	\$117,924	668	\$120,500	817	\$149,675
Offsetting Collections From:	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Black Lung Disability Trust Fund	152	\$39,101	150	\$39,789	152	\$44,059
Longshore Trust	7	\$2,205	7	\$2,205	7	\$2,271
C.1) Subtotal	159	\$41,306	157	\$41,994	159	\$46,330
D. Total Budgetary Resources	876	\$178,741	825	\$164,746	976	\$196,005
Unobligated Balance	-15	-\$1,278	0	\$0	0	\$0
Unexpired Unobligated Balance - American Rescue Plan Supplemental	2	-\$3,781	0	\$0	0	\$0
E. Total, Estimated Obligations	863	\$173,682	825	\$164,746	976	\$196,005

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

(Dollars in Thousands)

	FY 2023	FY 2024	
	Revised Enacted	Request	Net Change
			
Budget Authority			
General Funds	\$120,500	\$149,675	+\$29,175
Trust Funds	\$41,994	\$46,330	+\$4,336
Total	\$162,494	\$196,005	+\$33,511
Full Time Equivalents			
General Funds	668	817	149
Trust Funds	157	159	2
Total	825	976	151

FY 2024 Change

Explanation of Change	FY 20:	23 Base	Trus	st Funds	Genei	ral Funds	Total	
	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount
Increases:								
A. Built-Ins:								
To Provide For:								
Costs of pay adjustments	825	\$84,959	0	\$696	0	\$3,398	0	\$4,094
Personnel benefits	0	\$25,835	0	\$14	0	\$1,271	0	\$1,285
Employee health benefits	0	\$5,867	0	\$243	0	\$0	0	\$243
Moving allowance	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
One day less of Pay	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Federal Employees' Compensation								
Act (FECA)	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Benefits for former personnel	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Travel and transportation of persons	0	\$250	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Transportation of things	0	\$8	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Rental payments to GSA	0	\$7,057	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Rental payments to others	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Communications, utilities, and								
miscellaneous charges	0	\$1,610	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Printing and reproduction	0	\$232	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Advisory and assistance services	0	\$443	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Other services from non-Federal								
sources	0	\$6,166	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Working Capital Fund	0	\$16,677	0	\$353	0	\$1,278	0	\$1,631
Other Federal sources (Census								
Bureau)	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Other Federal sources (DHS Charges)	0	\$3,575	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Other goods and services from								
Federal sources	0	\$4,705	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Research & Development Contracts	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0

FY 2024 Change

Explanation of Change	FY 2	023 Base	Trus	st Funds	Gene	ral Funds	Total	
	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount
Operation and maintenance of								
facilities	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Operation and maintenance of								
equipment	0	\$3,272	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Supplies and materials	0	\$397	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Equipment	0	\$64	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Grants, subsidies, and contributions	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Insurance claims and indemnities	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Built-Ins Subtotal	825	+\$161,117	0	+\$1,306	0	+\$5,947	0	+\$7,253
B. Programs:								
Federal Employee Program FTE								
Restoration	0	\$0	0	\$0	149	\$23,273	149	\$23,273
Processing of DCMWC Mandatory		·		·		. ,		. ,
Workload	0	\$0	0	\$2,405	0	\$0	0	\$2,405
DCMWC Staffing Request	0	\$0	2	\$500	0	\$0	2	\$500
DCMWC Automated Support		* -		• • • • •		* -		• • • • •
Package	0	\$0	0	\$125	0	\$0	0	\$125
Programs Subtotal			2	+\$3,030	149	+\$23,273	151	+\$26,303
Total Increase	825	+\$161,117	2	+\$4,336	149	+\$29,220	151	+\$33,556
Decreases:								
A. Built-Ins:								
To Provide For:								
Federal Employees' Compensation								
Act (FECA)	0	\$1,377	0	\$0	0	-\$45	0	-\$45
Built-Ins Subtotal	0	+\$1,377	0	\$0	0	-\$45	0	-\$45
B. Programs:								
Programs Subtotal			0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Total Decrease	0	+\$1,377	0	\$0	0	-\$45	0	-\$45
Total Change	825	+\$162,494	2	+\$4,336	149	+\$29,175	151	+\$33,511

SUMMARY BUDGET AUTHORITY AND FTE BY ACTIVITY¹

(Dollars in Thousands)

·							Diff. FY	24 Request /
	_	Y 2022	F	Y 2023	FY	Z 2024	FY23 Revised Enacted	
	Revis	ed Enacted	Revis	ed Enacted	Re	equest		
	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount	FTE	Amount
FEDERAL PROGRAMS FOR WORKERS'								
COMPENSATION	816	159,230	825	162,494	976	196,005	151	33,511
General Funds	657	117,924	668	120,500	817	149,675	149	29,175
Trust Funds	159	41,306	157	41,994	159	46,330	2	4,336
Division of Federal Employees Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation	664	120,129	675	122,705	824	151,946	149	29,241
DFELHWC General Funds	657	117,924	668	120,500	817	149,675	149	29,175
DFELHWC Trust Funds	7	2,205	7	2,205	7	2,271	0	66
Division of Coal Mine Workers' Compensation	152	39,101	150	39,789	152	44,059	2	4,270
Black Lung Disability Trust Funds	152	39,101	150	39,789	152	44,059	2	4,270

NOTE: FY 2022 reflects actual FTE.

¹ For the Division of Coal Mine Workers' Compensation, the FY 2022 and FY 2023 levels reflect the post-sequestration amount and the FY 2024 level reflects the pre-sequestration amounts.

	BUDGET AUTHORIT	Y BY OBJE Thousands)	CT CLASS	}	
		FY 2022 Revised Enacted	FY 2023 Revised Enacted	FY 2024 Request	Diff. FY24 Request / FY23 Revised Enacted
	Full-Time Equivalent				
	Full-time Permanent	816	825	976	151
	Total	816	825	976	151
	Total Number of Full-Time Permanent				
	Positions	816	825	976	151
	Average ES Salary	\$189,471	\$193,734	\$201,290	\$7,556
	Average GM/GS Grade	12/3	12/3	12/3	0
	Average GM/GS Salary	\$91,764	\$94,830	\$98,528	\$3,698
11.1	Full-time permanent	79,999	82,937	103,601	20,664
11.3	Other than full-time permanent	0	144	144	0
11.5	Other personnel compensation	1,789	1,878	1,878	0
11.8	Special personal services payments	0	0	0	0
11.9	Total personnel compensation	81,788	84,959	105,623	20,664
12.1	Civilian personnel benefits	31,259	33,079	41,715	8,636
13.0	Benefits for former personnel	18	0	0	0
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons	214	250	300	50
22.0	Transportation of things	0	8	8	0
23.0	Rent, Communications, and Utilities	0	0	0	0
23.1	Rental payments to GSA	7,334	7,057	7,057	0
23.2	Rental payments to others	0	0	0	0
23.2	Communications, utilities, and miscellaneous	Ü	0	Ü	<u> </u>
23.3	charges	1,739	1,610	1,610	0
24.0	Printing and reproduction	194	232	232	0
25.1	Advisory and assistance services	372	443	443	0
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources	8,503	6,166	8,571	2,405
	Other goods and services from Federal	0,505	0,100	5,5 / 1	2,103
25.3	sources 1/	22,894	24,957	26,588	1,631
25.4	Operation and maintenance of facilities	0	0	0	0
25.5	Research and development contracts	0	0	0	0
25.7	Operation and maintenance of equipment	3,970	3,272	3,397	125
26.0	Supplies and materials	428	397	397	0
31.0	Equipment	310	64	64	0
41.0	Grants, subsidies, and contributions	0	0	0	0
42.0	Insurance claims and indemnities	207	0	0	0
	Total	159,230	162,494	196,005	33,511
1:-:					
1/Oth	er goods and services from Federal sources			10.55	
	Working Capital Fund	15,818	16,677	18,308	1,631
	DHS Services	965	3,575	3,575	0
	Services by DOL Agencies	6,111	4,555	4,555	0
	Services by Other Government Departments	0	150	150	0

	APPRO	PRIATION HIST	TORY. ²		
		llars in Thousand	s)		
	Budget Estimates to Congress	House Allowance	Senate Allowance	Appropriations	FTE
2014					
Base Appropriation	\$120,600			\$111,783	836
2015					
Base Appropriation	\$115,115			\$113,000	820
2016					
Base Appropriation	\$119,574			\$115,501	796
2017					
Base Appropriation	\$126,159			\$117,601	739
2018					
Base Appropriation	\$115,282	\$116,550		\$117,261	721
2019					
Base Appropriation	\$115,282		\$117,601	\$117,601	710
2020					
Base Appropriation1/	\$117,782	\$120,782		\$117,601	680
2021					
Base Appropriation1/	\$119,312			\$117,601	614
2022					
Base Appropriation2/	\$140,809	\$140,809		\$120,129	664
2023					
Base Appropriation	\$145,977			\$122,705	675
2024					
Base Appropriation	\$151,946				817

 $^{^{1/}}$ FTE for FY 2020 and FY 2021 reflect the Shared Services Realignment. $^{2/}$ This bill was passed by the House. It was not taken up by the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee or the full Senate Appropriations Committee.

² Appropriation amounts do not include amounts for the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund which are provided under a separate appropriation.

BUDGET AUTHORITY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE										
	(Dollars in Thousands)									
				Diff. FY24						
				Request /						
	FY 2022	FY 2023		FY23						
	Revised	Revised	FY 2024	Revised						
	Enacted	Enacted	Request	Enacted						
Activity Appropriation	159,230	162,494	196,005	33,511						
FTE	801	825	976	151						

NOTE: FY 2022 reflects actual FTE. Authorized FTE for FY 2022 was 816.

Introduction

Federal Programs for Workers' Compensation (FPWC) provides funding for OWCP and two of its program divisions.

- 1. The Division of Federal Employees', Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation (DFELHWC)'s Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA) Program provides wageloss compensation, medical treatment, return-to-work assistance and vocational rehabilitation to civilian employees of the Federal Government injured at work and to certain other designated groups. DFELHWC's Longshore Program provides administrative oversight of the award and delivery of benefits to injured private-sector workers engaged in certain maritime and related employment and to overseas contractors covered by the provisions of the Defense Base Act (DBA). The workers covered by DFELHWC's FECA and Longshore Programs should be able to sleep at night knowing if they get injured at work, they will receive equitable, timely service no matter who they are, what they do, or where they live.
- 2. The Division of Coal Mine Workers' Compensation (DCMWC) provides monetary compensation and medical benefits to coal miners totally disabled by pneumoconiosis (Black Lung) stemming from coal mine employment, and monetary benefits to their dependent survivors. DCMWC will support the priorities of the President's Management Agenda by delivering excellent Federal services and improving customer experience while managing the business of Government. The program will also further the Department's priorities of protecting workers morning, noon, and night by ensuring equity, being bold, and building the team. To achieve these objectives, in FY 2024 DCMWC will advance equity initiatives to support underserved stakeholder communities. DCMWC will also implement strategic efforts to streamline, modernize, and enhance program operations to boost overall efficiency, improve customer service, and facilitate the effective and equitable delivery of benefits and services.

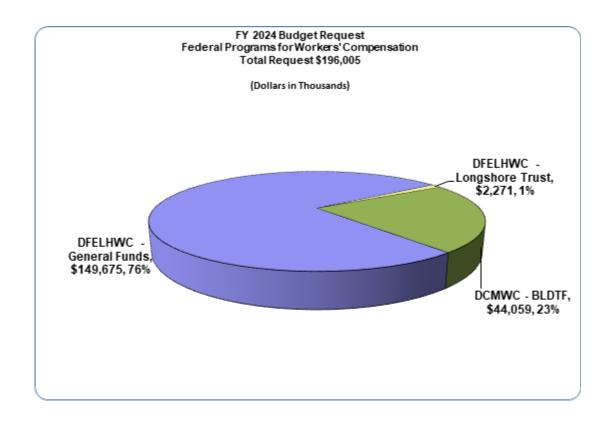
Total resources requested in FY 2024 for FPWC are \$196,005,000 and 976 FTE. The FY 2024 Request Level by budget activity is as follows:

- \$151,946,000 and 824 FTE for DFELHWC consisting of:
 - o \$149,675,000 and 817 FTE for DFELHWC in General Funds Salaries & Expenses funding.

- o \$2,271,000 and 7 FTE for DFELHWC in Longshore Trust funding.
- \$44,059,000 and 152 FTE for DCMWC in funding transferred from the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund.

The requests include additional resources for:

- \$23,273,000 and 149 FTE for DFELHWC's staffing request in General Salaries & Expenses funding;
- \$500,000 and 2 FTE for DCMWC's staffing request in funding transferred from the BLDTF;
- \$125,000 for DCMWC's Automated Support Package request in funding transferred from the BLDTF



BUDGET AUTHORITY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE (Dollars in Thousands)								
FY 2022 FY 2023 Revised Revised FY 2024 Revised Enacted Enacted Request Enacte								
Activity Appropriation	120,129	122,705	151,946	29,241				
FTE	651	675	824	149				

NOTE: FY 2022 reflects actual FTE. Authorized FTE for FY 2022 was 664.

Introduction

The Division of Federal Employees', Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation (DFELHWC)'s Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) program provides wage-loss compensation, medical treatment, return-to-work assistance, and vocational rehabilitation to civilian employees of the Federal Government injured at work and to certain other designated groups.

DFELHWC's Longshore program provides administrative oversight of the award and delivery of benefits to injured private-sector workers engaged in certain maritime and related employment and to overseas contractors covered by the provisions of the Defense Base Act (DBA).

The Longshore program receives approximately 35,000 new claims per year and collects assessments for the Special Workers Compensation Fund (SWCF), which provides benefits directly to certain individuals (claimants), including bi-weekly recurring benefit payments to over 2,500 beneficiaries. There are approximately 550 companies authorized to write insurance or self-insure liabilities under the LHWCA and its extensions. The program maintains over \$4,000,000,000 in securities to ensure the continuing provision of benefits for covered workers in case of employer/carrier insolvency.

Requested DFELHWC resources for FY 2024 are \$151,946,000 and 824 FTE and include an increase of \$23,273,000 for a staffing request of an additional 149 FTE. The additional 149 FTE will bring caseloads down to approximately 370 cases per claims examiner in the FECA program. Outside of OWCP, the caseload for claims examiners ranges from 100-200 cases per examiner, and it is critical for the program to move closer to that range in order to provide an acceptable level of customer service and program integrity oversight.

At this level, the FECA program will continue the core activities of its mission, including adjudication of new injury and illness claims, processing initial wage-loss compensation claims, and disability management and return-to-work services. The increase will bring the FECA program caseload closer to the industry standard per claims examiner and enable the program to keep pace with inflationary increases in staff and contractual costs, thereby improving customer service and facilitating the program's ability to adequately perform periodic entitlement reviews, which ensure injured workers currently being paid, are still entitled to benefits. The program has approximately 30,000 long-term disability cases, each requiring a review by the claims examiner every year that includes determining whether continuing disability is causally related to the accepted employment-related conditions, which requires focused time and critical thinking that

are hampered by their higher than industry standard caseloads. These periodic roll case payments account for nearly \$2,000,000,000 in annual compensation and DOL's Office of Inspector General (OIG) has alleged increased instances of the program's failure to reduce or terminate compensation consistent with its program guidance.

While the Longshore program funds its operations from the General Fund, management of the SWCF is supported by a direct transfer from the SWCF that is referred to as "Longshore Trust Funds." OWCP finances the SWCF by assessments on the carriers and self-insured employers who underwrite or perform Longshore-related work. The LHWCA authorizes the Secretary of Labor to utilize funds from the SWCF to ensure its solvency and financial strength (see Sections 44(d) and 44(i) of the Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act Amendments of 1984). For FY 2024, these activities (as well as vocational rehabilitation services in Sec 39(c) of the Act) will be supported by the direct transfer of \$2,271,000 from the SWCF. In addition, the Longshore program conducts audits of selected entities in order to protect the SWCF from potential risk as required under the LHWCA and to ensure those entities are accurately reporting their claim liabilities.

Five-Year Budget Activity Component History

Fiscal Year	Funding	FTE
	(Dollars in Thousands)	
2019	\$117,601	710
2020	\$117,601	680
2021	\$117,601	614
2022	\$120,129	664
2023	\$122,705	675

FY 2024

Requested resources for FY 2024 are \$151,946,000 and 824 FTE. Of these amounts, the Longshore Trust Fund provides \$2,271,000 and 7 FTE. The requested amount is an increase of \$29,241,000 from the FY 2023 Revised Enacted. It includes a program increase of \$23,273,000 and 149 FTE in the FECA program for improved customer service and industry workload equity, and an increase of \$5,968,000 for FECA, WCF, and built-in pay and benefits funding to avoid erosion of FTE from pay raises and increased benefit costs.

At this level, the FECA program will continue the core activities of its mission, including adjudication of new injury and illness claims, processing initial wage-loss compensation claims, and disability management and return-to-work services. The additional FTE will bring caseloads down to approximately 370 cases per claims examiner in the FECA program. Outside of OWCP, the caseload for claims examiners ranges from 100-200 cases per examiner, and it is critical for the program to move closer to that range in order to provide an acceptable level of customer service and program integrity oversight.

In FY 2024, the FECA program will support the President's priority of improving the customer experience as well as the Secretary's vision of empowering workers by ensuring that staff have the right skills and operate with the responsiveness and flexibility to perform initial claims intake and adjudication, wage-loss claims processing and payment, early disability case management, periodic roll management, and appeals processing. The program will also continue its focus on three fundamental tenets of workers' compensation: 1) Learn about the injury as soon as possible; 2) Provide timely access to treatment; and 3) Return the injured worker to pre-injury status both economically and medically as soon as possible.

With the objective of utilizing data as a strategic asset to improve program effectiveness, oversight and transparency, the request includes continued funding for the SWCF. This funding will allow the Longshore program to perform ongoing longstanding financial compliance audits to hold all SWCF participants accountable for their fair share of the annual assessment by increasing financial recoveries, serve as a deterrent to under-reporting, and reduce additional costs to compliant employers who are left to make the SWCF whole.

In alignment with the President's Priority of Advancing Racial and Gender Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government, DFELHWC is committed to finding ways to make a thoughtful and intentional focus on equity a routine part of how the agency does business in FY 2024.

FY 2023

Total FY 2023 resources are \$122,705,000 and 675 FTE. Of these amounts, the Longshore Trust Fund provides \$2,205,000 and 7 FTE.

In FY 2023, the FECA program will ensure that staff have the right skills and operate with the responsiveness and flexibility to perform initial claims intake and adjudication, wage-loss claims processing and payment, early disability case management, periodic roll management, and appeals processing. Aligning staff to perform all aspects of case management on a given case from beginning to end will best serve the government by creating equitable work assignments and standardized processes and will benefit our stakeholders by working with a single claims examiner who is familiar with the entire life of a claim.

In FY 2023, the Longshore program will also continue its focus on improved electronic claims filing, case creation, and claims management systems to drive shorter compliance timeframes.

The Longshore program collects detailed data and tracks each case until resolution or permanency has been reached. Each final case outcome can determine specifically whether the injured worker has any lasting effects from the injury. When the injured worker is entitled to compensation, the program will collect detailed information about the timeliness and accuracy of the initial payments. When payment delivery is not timely or accurate, staff will investigate the reasons and work with the employer/carrier to identify the root of the problem.

To support the President's Priority of Advancing Racial and Gender Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government, DFELHWC is piloting a survey to

identify barriers of entry to the programs, gathering information on demographic barriers as well as other obstacles that can be addressed through improved customer service and outreach. Depending on the results of the surveys, this may result in actions such as outreach to Longshore and federal employee unions to provide more direct training to them and their members, and collaboration with large Longshore employers and federal employers to promote information sharing with employees on how to file claims for injuries. The surveys will provide space for respondents to provide optional demographic information.

FY 2022

Revised Enacted resources for FY 2022 were \$120,129,000 and 664 FTE. Of these amounts, the Longshore Trust Fund provided \$2,205,000 and 7 FTE.

At this funding level, the FECA program continued the core activities of its mission, including adjudication of new injury and illness claims, processing initial wage-loss compensation claims, and disability management and return-to-work services.

In FY 2022, staff funded by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) managed the increased caseload associated with FECA COVID-19 claims and included claims examiners, supervisors, quality assurance and mentoring examiners, and technical assistance staff.

To support the President's Priority of Advancing Racial and Gender Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government, DFELHWC updated the OWCP Employees' Compensation Operations and Management Portal to allow stakeholders to complete an equity survey and collect voluntary demographic information from FECA claimants (race, religion, sexual orientation, marriage type (same sex), and disability status) as well as provide non-binary gender options for FECA program filing forms.

	WORKLOAD AND PERFORMANCE SU	JWIWIAKY			
		FY 2022 Revised Enacted		FY 2023 Revised Enacted	FY 2024 Request
		Target	Result	Target	Target
Division o	f Federal Employees Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation	S	1		
Strategic	Goal 3 - Improve Administration of and Strengthen Worker Safety Net Programs				
Strategic administr	Objective 3.1 - Ensure timely and accurate income support when work is unavailable by ation.	strengthening	benefits prog	grams and progra	m
	Performance Measures				
FEC	Percent of wage-loss claims timely processed within 14 days: claims not requiring				
1a	further development	92%	93%	92%	929
FEC 1b	Percent of all wage-loss claims timely processed within 90 days: all claims	95%	98%	95%	959
RTW 5	Rate of return-to-work outcomes for injured federal workers during the initial 45-day post-injury period for traumatic injuries	69.12%	84.93%	69.81%	70.519
LS 3a	Percent of Employer's First Report of Injury filed within 20 days: non-Defense Base Act cases	92.0%	93.5%	92.5%	93.59
LS 6	Percent of Industry Special Workers' Compensation Fund (Longshore Trust) Final Assessment Bills Collected within 60-days of Issuance	90%	90%	90%	909
	Workloads				
FEC WL 1	Cases Created	100,000[p]	182,318	150,000[p]	140,000[]
FEC	Initial Wage-loss Claims Received				

WORKLOAD AND PERFORMANCE SUMMARY					
		FY 2022 Revised Enacted		FY 2023 Revised Enacted	FY 2024 Request
		Target	Result	Target	Target
FEC WL 6	Number of Compensation and Medical Payments Processed (By Chargeback Year)	7,400,000[p]	6,746,266	7,000,000[p]	7,000,000[p]
FEC WL 9	Number of Wage-loss Claims Received	172,000[p]	132,760	170,000[p]	150,000[p]
LS WL 2	Number of Claims with Lost Time / Injuries Reported	33,879[p]	35,957	36,235[p]	37,256[p]

Legend: (r) Revised (e) Estimate (base) Baseline -- Not Applicable TBD - To Be Determined [p] - Projection

Workload and Performance Narrative

The Division of Federal Employees', Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation (DFELHWC) performs a variety of activities to accomplish its goals, including initial claims intake and adjudication; wage-loss claims processing and payment; early disability case management; periodic roll management; and appeals processing; and administrative oversight of the award and delivery of benefits to injured private-sector workers engaged in certain maritime and related employment and to overseas contractors covered by the provisions of the Defense Base Act (DBA).

FECA Program Case Creation and Initial/Wage-loss Adjudication

The FECA program expects to continue to see an increase in COVID-19 claims and as a result expects to receive 140,000 new injury claims and 15,000 initial claims for FECA wage-loss compensation in FY 2024. Over 85 percent of the new injury claims are expected to be for traumatic injuries, such as those caused by slips and falls. The remainder are expected to involve more complex situations in which a medical condition arises due to occupational exposure. The FECA program expects to receive 150,000 wage-loss claims in FY 2024. In FY 2022, the program exceeded established targets for the timely processing of wage-loss claims. The program processed 93 percent of claims that did not need further development within 14 days and process 92 percent of claims that do not need further development within 14 days and process 95 percent of all wage-loss claims within 90 days.

FECA Program Disability Management and Processing of Compensation and Medical Payments The FECA program continues work with agencies across the federal government to return the injured worker to pre-injury status both economically and medically as soon as possible. The program expects to return 70.51 percent of injured federal workers to work during the initial 45-day post-injury period for traumatic injuries in FY 2024. The FECA program staff process benefits for those who sustain a work-related injury or illness in the performance of duty anywhere in the world. Benefits include wage-replacement payments and payments for reasonable and necessary medical treatment related to the injury. In Chargeback Year (CBY) 2022 (July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022), the program processed a total of 6,746,265 compensation and medical payments. In CBY 2022, 178,583 beneficiaries received \$2.92 billion in benefit payments, including \$2.05 billion for wage-loss compensation, \$157 million for death benefits, and \$717 million for medical benefits. The program expects to process 7,000,000 compensation and medical payments in FY 2024.

Longshore Program Claims Processing and Benefits Delivery Oversight

The Longshore program provides administrative oversight of benefit award and delivery by employers and insurance carriers to injured private sector workers and is responsible for collecting annual industry assessments to support the Special Workers' Compensation Fund (SWCF).

The Longshore program focuses on employer/carrier performance to ensure that injury reports and first payment of benefits are timely. The program updated its performance measures in FY 2020, decreasing the number of days to submit key reports: for first injury reports from 30 days

to 20 days. In FY 2024, the program expects 93 percent of first report of injury for non-Defense Base Act (DBA) cases to be submitted within 20 days.

Longshore Program Insurance Authorization and Risk Securitization / SWCF Management
A major program responsibility is collecting annual industry assessments that support the SWCF.
As part of the program's obligations to ensure the Fund has adequate resources to pay benefits, it must collect these assessments in a timely manner from those entities that utilize the Fund, first for an estimated amount and then a final adjusted amount each year. the Longshore program expects to collect 90 percent of final assessment bills within 60-days of issuance in FY 2024.

BUDGET ACTIVITY COMPONENT BY OBJECT CLASS							
(Dollars in Thousands)							
					Diff. FY24		
					Request /		
		FY 2022	FY 2023		FY23		
		Revised	Revised	FY 2024	Revised		
		Enacted	Enacted	Request	Enacted		
11.1	Full-time permanent	67,094	67,384	87,109	19,725		
11.3	Other than full-time permanent	0	144	144	0		
11.5	Other personnel compensation	1,466	1,504	1,504	0		
11.9	Total personnel compensation	68,560	69,032	88,757	19,725		
12.1	Civilian personnel benefits	26,376	27,207	35,430	8,223		
13.0	Benefits for former personnel	0	0	0	0		
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons	99	180	180	0		
22.0	Transportation of things	0	8	8	0		
23.0	Rent, Communications, and Utilities	0	0	0	0		
23.1	Rental payments to GSA	5,869	5,969	5,969	0		
23.2	Rental payments to others	0	0	0	0		
	Communications, utilities, and miscellaneous						
23.3	charges	1,238	1,160	1,160	0		
24.0	Printing and reproduction	132	224	224	0		
25.1	Advisory and assistance services	372	443	443	0		
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources	1,331	944	944	0		
	Other goods and services from Federal						
25.3	sources 1/	12,450	16,053	17,346	1,293		
25.5	Research and development contracts	0	0	0	0		
25.7	Operation and maintenance of equipment	2,989	1,219	1,219	0		
26.0	Supplies and materials	236	232	232	0		
31.0	Equipment	300	34	34	0		
42.0	Insurance claims and indemnities	177	0	0	0		
	Total	120,129	122,705	151,946	29,241		
		ŕ	Í	Í	,		
1/Oth	er goods and services from Federal sources						
	Working Capital Fund	7,962	10,703	11,996	1,293		
	DHS Services	811	3,335	3,335	0		
	Services by DOL Agencies	3,677	2,015	2,015	0		

CHANGES IN FY 2024

(Dollars in Thousands)

Activity Changes	
Built-In	
To Provide For:	
Costs of pay adjustments	\$3,435
Personnel benefits	1,285
Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA)	-45
Benefits for former personnel	0
Travel and transportation of persons	0
Transportation of things	0
Rental payments to GSA	0
Rental payments to others	0
Communications, utilities, and miscellaneous charges	0
Printing and reproduction	0
Advisory and assistance services	0
Other services from non-Federal sources	0
Working Capital Fund	1,293
Other Federal sources (DHS Charges)	0
Other goods and services from Federal sources	0
Research & Development Contracts	0
Operation and maintenance of equipment	0
Supplies and materials	0
Equipment	0
Insurance claims and indemnities	0
Built-Ins Subtotal	\$5,968
Net Program	\$23,273
Direct FTE	149
DICCLIE	14)
Estimate	FTE
Base \$128,673	675
Program Increase \$23,273	149
Program Decrease \$0	0

BUDGET AUTHORITY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE3						
(Dollars in T	(Dollars in Thousands)					
Diff. F						
	FY 2022	FY 2023		Request /		
	Revised	Revised	FY 2024	Revised		
	Enacted	Enacted	Request	Enacted		
Activity Appropriation	39,101	39,789	44,059	4,270		
FTE	150	150	152	2		

NOTE: FY 2022 reflects actual FTE. Authorized FTE for FY 2022 was 152.

Introduction

OWCP's Division of Coal Mine Workers' Compensation (DCMWC) provides benefits to coal industry workers totally disabled by pneumoconiosis, as well as their dependent survivors. Pneumoconiosis – also known as Black Lung disease – is a debilitating condition resulting from exposure to coal mine dust which currently has no cure. OWCP draws its mandate from Title IV of the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969, as amended. The core mission and budget activities of the program are to develop and adjudicate claims and pay benefits. Claims examiners and supporting staff in district offices across the country process benefit applications and make decisions on benefit eligibility. In addition, staff members monitor benefit payments and medical treatment provided by self-insured coal mine operators or their insurance carriers.

Overall, the Black Lung Program aims to issue both timely and accurate decisions on claims for benefits under the Black Lung Benefits Act (BLBA). An important component of any claim for benefits under the BLBA is the identification of and notification to the coal mine operator who will be responsible for paying any benefits that may arise. In the majority of cases, this identification occurs in a timely fashion without delay; however, there are some claims where identifying the responsible coal mine operator is more challenging and delays may arise. Therefore, we have developed an internal review process to identify and monitor any claims that may have become delayed and to take action to expedite affirmative identification and notification of the operator. Specifically, any claim where the identification is not made within 90 days will be referred to a quick-response team for priority handling and resolution. Our hope is that this internal review process will both decrease processing time and increase the accuracy of the program's decisions.

Five-Year Budget Activity Component History

Fiscal Year	<u>Funding</u>	FTE
	(Dollars in Thousands)	
2019	\$35,875	158
2020	\$35,989	157
2021	\$38,326	156
2022	\$39,101	152
2023	\$39,789	150

³ The FY 2022 and FY 2023 levels reflect the post-sequestration amounts. The FY 2024 level reflects the presequestration amount.

FY 2024

The FY 2024 President's Budget level of \$44,059,000 and 152 FTE includes an increase of \$500,000 to fulfill DCMWC's staffing request to include a new GS-14/15 Deputy Administrator of Field Operations and a new GS-13 Outreach Coordinator, as well as promotions of four District Director positions from the GS-14 to the GS-15 level, five Workers' Compensation Assistant positions from the GS-6 to the GS-7 level, and the conversion of one existing position to a GS-14 Management & Program Analyst. The Budget also includes an increase of \$125,000 for upgrading DCMWC's Automated Support Package, the program's claims management system. Finally, the Budget includes a built-in increase of \$1,240,000 for inflationary costs of pay, benefits, and WCF for OWCP in administering the Black Lung program and managing the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund. These built-ins are necessary to prevent further staff erosion from pay raises.

In FY 2024, DCMWC will support the priorities of the President's Management Agenda by advancing the vision of an equitable, effective and accountable Government. DCMWC is well positioned to address inequities because of its status as a benefits program. By striving to eliminate barriers applicants from underserved communities face as they go through the process of obtaining benefits under the Black Lung Benefits Act, the program will endeavor to administer the law equitably. The requested staffing increase will bolster this effort by providing additional staffing resources to specifically support related work, such as outreach.

DCMWC will also utilize data as a strategic asset to improve program effectiveness and accountability. The requested funding for upgrading DCMWC claims management systems and subsystems will aid efforts to enhance customer experience by allowing for the retention of information collected during efforts to promote equity and improve the accessibility of program forms. The upgrades will also allow for flexibility to enact other system enhancements, such as the expansion of allowing claimants to sign forms electronically.

DCMWC will also further the Department's priorities of protecting workers morning, noon, and night by undertaking strategic plans to build the team of program employees. DCMWC will continue to institutionalize Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) in supervisory performance plans, carry forward key standardization initiatives to place all employees on an equal playing field, maximize the power of shared best practices, and promote efficient program operations through the implementation of uniform policies, procedures, and IT initiatives. The program will also use multiple methods to recruit new employees from traditionally underserved communities, including sharing job announcements with electronic mailing lists that reach those communities and continuing focused outreach at Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

FY 2023

The FY 2023 Revised Enacted level for DCMWC is \$39,789,000 and 150 FTE.

In FY 2023, DCMWC will strive to achieve goals established in the Agency Management Plan. To that end, DCMWC will identify its most vulnerable stakeholder populations by utilizing a variety of strategies. The program will undertake an initiative to develop tools to obtain, and

subsequently analyze, demographic information from claimants. As part of this initiative, DCMWC will also make its existing claim forms more user-friendly and enhance the effectiveness of the forms as essential data gathering tools. In addition, DCMWC will conduct analysis of census tract data to further identify potentially underserved communities of stakeholders. DCMWC will subsequently improve outreach to identified underserved communities by holding targeted, in-person events and leveraging new tools to expand its social media presence.

DCMWC will also develop and deliver customer service experience surveys with strong equity components to stakeholders. The analysis of the information gathered by these surveys will allow the program to both improve its customer service generally, and specifically identify and address any accessibility issues reported by respondents.

Additionally, DCMWC will direct its resources and strategies towards maximizing productivity and efficiency through operational standardization and process streamlining, and maintaining a balanced, sustainable approach to claims inventory management. DCMWC will use informed analysis and information technology (IT) innovations to enhance performance and keep pace with the significant incoming claims volume, ensure accurate and timely adjudication of benefits, and modernize and streamline program operations.

FY 2022

The FY 2022 Revised Enacted level for DCMWC was \$39,101,000 and 152 FTE. This included program increases of \$265,000 for Responsible Operator Self-Insurance and Black Lung Claims System maintenance.

The Division utilized \$265,000 increase to maintain and enhance commercial insurance and self-insurance databases as part of the ongoing implementation of Government Accountability Office recommendations for improving oversight of the coal mine operators' insurance process to protect the BLDTF. DCMWC incorporated reporting features into the commercial insurance database for better monitoring of new, expired, and cancelled policies. The Division enhanced the self-insurance database to support revisions to the self-insurance process and to ensure there is appropriate data storage for a large volume of electronic documentation.

While ensuring a proactive response to the COVID-19 pandemic to assist stakeholders while minimizing disruptions to core program operations, DCMWC continued the core activities of its mission to adjudicate incoming and pending claims, pay monthly compensation, and ongoing medical treatment benefits to 10,475 beneficiaries, monitor cash and medical treatment benefits disbursed by coal mine operators to 6,187 additional beneficiaries, received 5,066 new, incoming claims as COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, as well as managed approximately 3,400 claims pending decision.

	WORKLOAD AND PERFORMANCE SUM	MARY			
		FY 2022 Revised Enacted		FY 2023	FY 2024 Request
				Revised Enacted	
		Target	Result	Target	Target
Division o	of Coal Mine Workers' Compensation				
Strategic	Goal 3 - Improve Administration of and Strengthen Worker Safety Net Programs				
Strategic administr	Objective 3.1 - Ensure timely and accurate income support when work is unavailable by stration.	engthening b	enefits pro	ograms and progran	n
	Performance Measures				
CM 7	Average number of days to complete Proposed Decision and Order following completion of				
	all claim development for all Responsible Operator Merit Claims	34	24	32	30
CM 8	Number of decisions issued	5,250	6,133	5,500	5,500
CM 9	Percent of Black Lung claims pending at the start of the fiscal year that are resolved by the				
	end of the fiscal year	86%	91%	87%	88%
	Workload Volumes				
CM	Number of Claims Received				
WL 1		6,500[p]	5,066	6,000[p]	6,500[p]
CM	Number of Claims in Pending Proposed Decision and Order Inventory				
CIVI					

Legend: (r) Revised (e) Estimate (base) Baseline -- Not Applicable TBD - To Be Determined [p] - Projection

Workload and Performance Narrative

In FY 2024, the Division of Coal Mine Workers' Compensation (DCMWC) expects to receive 6,500 new claims and issue 5,500 decisions, resulting in a pending inventory of approximately 5,000 claims. DCMWC established the FY 2022 workload projections prior to observation of the continued effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on new claim filings. Notably, as a result of various factors associated with the pandemic, DCMWC continued to experience historically low incoming claims volumes in FY 2022, which resulted in a smaller than expected universe of pending claims. As such, the actual results for the "Number of Claims Received" and "Number of Claims in Pending Proposed Decision and Order Inventory" workload measures fell well under projections for FY 2022. However, DCMWC expects incoming claims to rebound to near pre-pandemic levels beginning in FY 2023 and into FY 2024. The projected increase in incoming claims will result in a corresponding increase in the size of the pending claims universe.

DCMWC will continue to prioritize the resolution of pending claims as a key strategic objective by optimizing productivity and promoting a balanced approach to claims management. In FY 2024, DCMWC expects that 88 percent of claims pending at the start of the fiscal year will be resolved by the end of the fiscal year. Additionally, following completion of all claim development for Responsible Operator Merit claims, DCMWC expects to complete proposed decision and orders within an average of 30 days.

BUDGET ACTIVITY COMPONENT BY OBJECT CLASS.4							
(Dollars in Thousands)							
		FY 2022	FY 2023		Diff. FY24 Request / FY23		
		Revised	Revised	FY 2024	Revised		
		Enacted	Enacted	Request	Enacted		
11.1	Full-time permanent	12,905	15,553	16,492	939		
11.3	Other than full-time permanent	0	0	0	0		
11.5	Other personnel compensation	323	374	374	0		
11.9	Total personnel compensation	13,228	15,927	16,866	939		
12.1	Civilian personnel benefits	4,883	5,872	6,285	413		
13.0	Benefits for former personnel	18	0	0	0		
21.0	Travel and transportation of persons	115	70	120	50		
22.0	Transportation of things	0	0	0	0		
23.1	Rental payments to GSA	1,465	1,088	1,088	0		
23.2	Rental payments to others	0	0	0	0		
	Communications, utilities, and miscellaneous						
23.3	charges	501	450	450	0		
24.0	Printing and reproduction	62	8	8	0		
25.1	Advisory and assistance services	0	0	0	0		
25.2	Other services from non-Federal sources	7,172	5,222	7,627	2,405		
	Other goods and services from Federal						
25.3	sources 1/	10,444	8,904	9,242	338		
25.4	Operation and maintenance of facilities	0	0	0	0		
25.5	Research and development contracts	0	0	0	0		
25.7	Operation and maintenance of equipment	981	2,053	2,178	125		
26.0	Supplies and materials	192	165	165	0		
31.0	Equipment	10	30	30	0		
41.0	Grants, subsidies, and contributions	0	0	0	0		
42.0	Insurance claims and indemnities	30	0	0	0		
	Total	39,101	39,789	44,059	4,270		
		Í	Í	Ź	ŕ		
1/Oth	er goods and services from Federal sources	_					
	Working Capital Fund	7,856	5,974	6,312	338		
	DHS Services	154	240	240	0		
	Services by DOL Agencies	2,434	2,540	2,540	0		
	Services by Other Government Departments	0	150	150	0		

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 $^{^4}$ The FY 2022 level reflects the post-sequestration amount. The FY 2023 and FY 2024 levels reflect the presequestration amounts.

CHANGES IN FY 2024

(Dollars in Thousands)

Activity Changes	
Built-In	
To Provide For:	
Costs of pay adjustments	\$659
Personnel benefits	0
Employee health benefits	243
Moving allowance	0
Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA)	0
Benefits for former personnel	0
Travel and transportation of persons	0
Transportation of things	0
Rental payments to GSA	0
Rental payments to others	0
Communications, utilities, and miscellaneous charges	0
Printing and reproduction	0
Advisory and assistance services	0
Other services from non-Federal sources	0
Working Capital Fund	338
Other Federal sources (Census Bureau)	0
Other Federal sources (DHS Charges)	0
Other goods and services from Federal sources	0
Research & Development Contracts	0
Operation and maintenance of facilities	0
Operation and maintenance of equipment	0
Supplies and materials	0
Equipment	0
Grants, subsidies, and contributions	0
Insurance claims and indemnities	0
Built-Ins Subtotal	\$1,240
	4-)
Net Program	\$3,030
Direct FTE	2
2	_
Estimate	FTE
Base \$41,029	150
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Program Increase \$3,030	2
D D	_
Program Decrease \$0	0