

Fact Sheet

EBSA Restores Over \$ 696.3 Million to Employee Benefit Plans, Participants and Beneficiaries

Through its enforcement of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), the Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) is responsible for ensuring the integrity of the private employee benefit plan system in the United States. EBSA's oversight authority extends to nearly 681,000 retirement plans, approximately 2.3 million health plans, and a similar number of other welfare benefit plans, such as those providing life or disability insurance. These plans cover about 143 million workers and their dependents and include assets of over \$ 8.7 trillion (as of October 2, 2015). In FY 2015, EBSA recovered \$ 696.3 million for direct payment to plans, participants and beneficiaries.¹ (Discussed below).

Total Monetary Recoveries				
Total Recoveries	Plan Assets Restored/ Participant Benefits Recovered	Voluntary Fiduciary Correction Program	Abandoned Plan Program	Monetary Benefit Recoveries from Informal Complaint Resolution
\$ 696.3M	\$ 265.3 M	\$ 14.3M	\$ 13.8M	\$ 402.9M

Civil Investigation Statistics Demonstrate Success in Targeting

In FY 2015, EBSA closed 2,441 civil investigations with 1,640 of those cases (67.2%) resulting in monetary results for plans or other corrective action, exhibiting its ability to effectively target ERISA violators in the employee benefit plan universe.

EBSA often pursues voluntary compliance as a means to correct violations and restore losses to employee benefit plans. However, in cases where voluntary compliance efforts have failed, or that involve issues for which voluntary compliance is not appropriate, EBSA forwards a recommendation to the Solicitor of Labor to initiate litigation. In FY 2015, 136 cases were referred for litigation. Together, EBSA and the Solicitor of Labor determine which cases are appropriate for litigation, considering the ability to obtain meaningful relief through litigation, cost of litigation, viability of other enforcement options, and agency enforcement priorities. EBSA cases referred to the Solicitor's office for litigation are often resolved with monetary payments, short of litigation. Nationwide in FY 2015, the Department filed suit in 89 civil cases.

Civil Investigations				
Civil Investigations Closed	Civil Investigations Closed with Results	Percent Civil Investigations Closed with Results	Civil Investigations Referred for Litigation	Civil Cases with Litigation Filed
2,441	1,640	67.2%	136	89

EBSA Investigations Led to the Indictment of 61 Persons for Crimes Related To Employee Benefit Plans in FY 2015

EBSA has responsibility to investigate potential violations of the criminal provisions of ERISA and those provisions of Title 18 of the United States Code that relate to employee benefit plans. EBSA conducts most of its criminal investigations with other federal law enforcement agencies under the direction of the United States

¹ These recoveries include plan assets restored/ participant benefits recovered, disgorgement of profits, and voluntary fiduciary corrections, as well as amounts recovered through the abandoned plan program and informal complaint resolution. The Agency's total monetary results for the year (including prohibited transactions corrected with no money exchanged and plan assets protected) were \$837.5 million.

Attorney for that jurisdiction. Other investigations are conducted in consultation with the appropriate state or local law enforcement authority.

In FY 2015, EBSA closed 275 criminal investigations. EBSA's criminal investigations, as well as its participation in criminal investigations with other law enforcement agencies, led to the indictment of 61 individuals – including plan officials, corporate officers, and service providers – for offenses related to employee benefit plans.

Criminal Investigations		
Criminal Investigations Closed	Criminal Investigations Closed with Guilty Pleas or Convictions	Number of Individuals Indicted
275	67	61

Abandoned Plan Program

The Abandoned Plan Program facilitates the termination of, and distribution of benefits from individual account pension plans that have been abandoned by their sponsoring employers. During FY 2015, EBSA received 590 applications from Qualified Termination Administrators and closed 207 applications with terminations approved, with 205 plans making distributions of \$13.8 million directly to participants pursuant to termination.

Compliance Assistance Programs Yielded Tremendous Results

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

The VFCP allows plan officials who have identified certain violations of ERISA to take corrective action to remedy the breaches and voluntarily report the violations to EBSA, without becoming the subject of an enforcement action. In FY 2015, EBSA received 1,478 applications for the VFCP.

The DFVCP encourages plan administrators to bring their plans into compliance with ERISA's filing requirements. More than 22,800 annual reports were received through this program in FY 2015.

Correction Programs	
VFCP Applications Received	DFVCP Filings Received
1,478	22,800

\$402.9 Million Restored to Workers through Informal Complaint Resolution

When workers experience a problem with an employee benefit plan, EBSA has proven effective in resolving their requests for assistance. In FY 2015, EBSA's benefits advisors closed more than 201,000 inquiries and recovered \$402.9 million in benefits on behalf of workers and their families through informal resolution of individual complaints. Many of the inquiries were received via EBSA's toll-free number 1-866-444-EBSA (3272) and Web site askebsa.dol.gov.

These inquiries are also a major source of enforcement leads. When EBSA becomes aware of repeated complaints with respect to a particular plan, employer, or service provider, or when there is information indicating a suspected fiduciary breach, the matter is referred for investigation. In FY 2015, 589 new investigations were opened as a result of referrals from benefits advisors.

Inquiry Statistics		
Total Inquiries	Monetary Benefit Recoveries from Informal Complaint Resolution	Investigations Opened from Inquiry Referrals
201,894	\$402.9 M	589

Over 1,800 Education and Outreach Events held in FY 2015

EBSA also conducts education and outreach events for workers, employers, plan officials and members of Congress. These nationwide activities include assisting dislocated workers who are facing job loss, educating employers of their obligations under ERISA, using a train-the-trainer format to inform Congressional staff of EBSA programs for their use in constituent services, and providing employees with information concerning their rights under the law.

Outreach, Education and Assistance				
Dislocated Worker Rapid Response Sessions	Congressional Briefings	Compliance Assistance Activities	Other Participant Assistance and Public Awareness Activities	Total Outreach Events
692	261	403	538	1,894

Extensive Publication and Web Site Usage Furthers Outreach Efforts

EBSA also reaches workers, retirees, employers, plan service providers, and the public through its printed materials and website at www.dol.gov/ebsa. English and Spanish language publications featuring participant and compliance assistance information are available through EBSA's toll-free number. Publications are also available electronically on its website, which gives users access to consumer information, relevant laws and regulations, technical guidance, seminar schedules, and other valuable resources.

Publications and Web Site	
Publications Distributed	Web Site Visitors
429,599	7.72M

Overall, EBSA's results demonstrate a strong, fair, and effective program that protects the benefits of America's workers and retirees.

This fact sheet has been developed by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Washington, DC, 20210. It will be made 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.