

# Strategic Goal 3:

## Foster Quality Workplaces that are Safe, Healthy and Fair

All workers are entitled to safe, healthy, and fair workplace environments. DOL is committed to promoting work sites where safety and health hazards are minimized and where working people enjoy equal opportunities and fairness. The Department also promotes free trade and fair labor conditions abroad so that everyone benefits from competitive enterprise.

Significant progress has been made in protecting workers from occupational safety and health threats. In the past thirty years, workplace fatalities have fallen to half their former rate and occupational injury and illness rates have declined forty percent. However, the number of workers DOL is responsible for protecting has doubled during this period, and trends in workplace demographics and in the nature of work itself present new challenges. Dangerous work is increasingly performed by those who are inexperienced or otherwise high-risk: non-English speakers, young workers, the elderly, and temporaries. Automation continues to introduce equipment and processes that require special training to operate safely.

Equality and fair play are central values in our national life. While minorities and women have made great strides in achieving equality in the American workplace, there is room for improvement. DOL promotes these values through its administration of anti-discrimination and equal employment opportunity regulations for Federal contractors and subcontractors, who employ more than 20 percent of the labor force in America – approximately 26 million workers.

DOL contributes to America's leadership on trade issues with its efforts to secure the benefits of open markets for American workers, consumers, families and businesses. In addition, the Department provides policy guidance across the globe on labor-related issues and supports technical cooperation projects that reduce the exploitation of child labor, strengthen social safety nets, and improve adherence to core labor standards.

The Department fosters Quality Workplaces by way of the three outcome goals listed below. The first aims to protect workers' safety and health, for their sake and for their employers'. The second goal is to increase compliance of DOL grantees with laws such as the Civil Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, and by assuring that federal contractors afford minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, and veterans an equal opportunity to compete for employment and advancement. The third outcome goal extends the Department's reach beyond U.S. borders by promoting strong labor standards in foreign countries.

### Outcome Goal 3.1

Reduce Workplace Injuries, Illnesses, and Fatalities

### Outcome Goal 3.2

Foster Equal Opportunity Workplaces

### Outcome Goal 3.3

Reduce Exploitation of Child Labor and Address Core International Labor Standards Issues

Agencies supporting this strategic goal are the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Employment Standards Administration (ESA), the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management (OASAM), and the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB).

In FY 2003, DOL achieved seven of nine performance goals under Strategic Goal 3. All trends were in the right direction, thanks in part to continued efforts of the DOL agencies responsible for promoting safe, healthy and fair workplaces. Performance highlights by outcome goal are listed below.

# Quality Workplaces

Outcome Goal 3.1 includes five performance goals, two for MSHA and three for OSHA. Three of these goals were achieved and two were not achieved.

- The mine industry fatal injury rate was reduced to .022 incidents per 200,000 hours worked and the all-injury incidence rate was reduced to 4.27 incidents per 200,000 hours worked.
- Respirable coal dust samples exceeding standards were reduced to 11.0 percent, silica dust samples in metal and nonmetal mines exceeding standards were reduced to 6.4 percent, and noise exposures above the citation level were reduced to 5.2 percent.
- Occupational fatalities per 100,000 workers fell to 1.61.
- Occupational injury and illnesses, as measured by lost workday rates per 100 full time workers, fell in all five designated high-hazard workplaces (shipyards, food processing, nursing homes, logging, and construction).
- Fatalities in the construction industry fell to 12.2 per 100,000 workers.

Both performance goals in Outcome Goal 3.2 (one for ESA and the other for OASAM) were achieved.

- The incidence of discrimination among evaluated contractors fell to just 1.2 percent; contractors' compliance with all other equal opportunity workplace standards increased to 72.4 percent.
- A disability checklist was developed for technical assistance reviews of the One-Stop Centers in New York, NY and Miami, FL. Alternative Dispute Resolution training was provided to all 112 New York State designated mediators to better equip them to mediate complaints of discrimination in the WIA One-Stop Career system.

ILAB met both of its performance goals under Outcome Goal 3.3.

- Almost 80,000 children were prevented or removed from labor, particularly its worst forms, through the provision of education or training opportunities.
- Ten percent of workplaces exposed to DOL project assistance (in Bangladesh, Central America, Ukraine) implemented new measures to prevent workplace accidents and illnesses.

For FY 2004 and beyond, DOL will employ the following strategies to make American workplaces even safer, healthier and fairer:

- Identify the most hazardous conditions and make the best use of inspection resources
- Expand outreach, education, and compliance assistance regarding prevention methods
- Encourage partnerships and voluntary programs that foster healthy and safe workplaces
- Assist federal contractors in recruiting qualified individuals with disabilities, eligible veterans, women, and minorities
- Develop and enhance partnerships with private and public entities to promote equal employment opportunity and anti-discrimination practices

All major DOL programs associated with this strategic goal, along with their purposes, results, costs, strategies, management issues and plans for FY 2004 are discussed in the following pages. Detailed historical information on each indicator is available in Appendix 4.