The Department of Labor ("DOL") is the lead Executive Branch agency that oversees the U.S. labor market. DOL helps ensure that employers live up to Federal labor market requirements including: minimum wage levels; worker safety; and collective bargaining rights. In addition, DOL collects and maintains U.S. labor market statistics as well as playing a central role in the administration of the "Trade Adjustment Assistance" program, which provides relief to industries and workers harmed by increased imports.

Further, DOL helps coordinate U.S. policy on labor market issues at international institutions such as the International Labor Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the United Nations, and the G20. The Office of International Relations analyzes other nations’ labor policies and reports on developments.

The agency’s main responsibilities in trade policy are two-fold, primarily conducted through the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB).

Firstly, DOL helps formulate on-going trade policy development and formulation within the U.S. Trade Representatives’ TPSC and TPRG processes, with a particular eye to the impact of possible trade agreements on U.S. labor markets. (See memo on USTR for more detail on U.S. trade policy formulation.)

Secondly, DOL’s Office of Trade and Labor Affairs (OTLA) helps monitor and implement trade-related labor provisions in recent U.S. trade agreements. For example, CAFTA-DR nations committed to enforcement of their own labor laws, especially in instances that might affect trade among the signatories. Complaints about enforcement of such laws can be submitted to the DOL for consideration. Such a submission was filed against Guatemala in 2008 by U.S. and Guatemalan labor organizations. DOL was involved in the establishment of an 18-point “Enforcement Plan” in 2013 aimed at resolving this issue. While the U.S. and Guatemalan governments formally agreed to this plan, the issue remains controversial in both the U.S. and Guatemala.
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Office of Trade and Labor Affairs Reports: http://www.dol.gov/ilab/media/reports/otla/
   Provides published studies and reports on labor research of various countries.

International Labor Affairs: http://www.dol.gov/ilab/map/countries/map-cont.htm
   Activities and Reports on DOL’s efforts and studies around the world.

Research and Reports: http://www.dol.gov/dol/audience/aud-researchers.htm
   This site provides all the links to information and data services the DOL offers to researchers. Reports on the site include budgets, statistical information, and labor laws.

Wirtz Labor Library: http://www.dol.gov/oasam/wirtzlaborlibrary/
   The digital Wirtz Labor Library provides the general public access to current events and historical resources regarding labor issues in the United States.

   Includes all the web content of the DOL and its agencies since 2009.

For Foreign Governments

Division of Technical Assistance and Cooperation: http://www.dol.gov/ilab/programs/otla/tac.htm
   Works with other governments and international organizations to identify assistance required to improve labor conditions of workers.

Division of Monitoring and Enforcement of Trade Agreements: http://www.dol.gov/ilab/programs/otla/meta.htm
   Monitors labor provisions of U.S. free trade agreements by communicating with labor ministries and international organizations.

For Foreign Businesses

ELaws: http://www.dol.gov/elaws/
   Provides employment law assistance for workers and small businesses.