

June 2019

# HR BRIEF

Provided by Insure NW

## **DOL Enforcement Actions Are up and Expected to Stay That Way**

U.S. Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta recently said that he “fully expects” OSHA inspections to increase once new inspectors are trained. Acosta’s remarks are in line with the significant increase in enforcement actions employers have seen in the past two fiscal years.

### **Increased DOL Enforcement Actions**

The DOL’s enforcement actions across the vast majority of its offices and agencies have increased in the past two fiscal years. In the 2016 fiscal year, OSHA conducted 31,948 inspections, and the Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) recovered \$352 million in enforcement actions. Comparatively, according to the most recent data, the

EBSA recovered \$1.1 billion in enforcement actions. Despite the increased action, DOL guidance on complying with rules and regulations has decreased.

### **What Does This Mean for Employers?**

Employers should be aware that the uptick of DOL enforcement actions will continue. As such, they should take action to review and evaluate their compliance obligations to avoid costly fines and penalties.

In particular, employers should review their OSHA obligations, as the DOL has communicated that inspections will continue to increase. Additionally, employers should take time to review the newly proposed overtime rule to identify which employees may be affected if the rule becomes final.

For more information on DOL compliance, please contact Insure NW.

## **Lowest Unemployment in Decades**

Job figures continued to rise in April, officially bringing unemployment to its lowest in 50 years—3.6%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Primary job gains occurred in the health and business services sectors, with respectable growth in construction as well.

With over 150,000 jobs being added each month, on average, employment growth shows no signs of slowing down.

However, despite this upward trend, experts caution to expect more modest job creation over the next few months.

### **Growth by the Numbers**

Unemployment fell across all categories tracked by the BLS.

Notably, unemployment rates for women and Hispanics dropped to record lows for the first time since 1953 and 1973, respectively.

But not all workers are feeling the economic gains.

Long-term unemployment is still high, and the number of part-time workers looking to work full-time remains steady, according to experts.

### **Employer Takeaway**

The labor market is tightening up, but it’s not tapped out. This means now is the time to attract talent and retain your current workforce.

Speak with us today to discuss strategies for doing both.