

New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL)

DELIVERABLES ACHIEVED SINCE 2021

Empowerment through Data Transparency

Date: 02/20/2024

Data Analytics Center

In 2021, NYSDOL created the Data Analytics Center (DAC) to bring more transparency, accessibility, and understanding to the public around labor market information. Staff have created more than 25 public-facing, interactive data dashboards that allow users to tailor their queries in different ways (geography, time periods, etc.) These dashboards are available on the NYSDOL website and are refreshed regularly. By exploring these dashboards, stakeholders can identify and better understand trends, patterns, and anomalies in the labor market.

These high-impact dashboards assist internal and external stakeholders in navigating changing labor market conditions and developing crucial policy insights based on reliable information. They cover a wide range of topics, including information about Current Employment Statistics (CES), Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), Unemployment Insurance (UI) data, and Census Bureau data.

In addition, the Department has leveraged the DAC to curate more focused areas on our website. For example, NYSDOL's 2023 Gender Wage Gap study was released in digital format and was done in conjunction with creating an entire gender wage gap hub [Gender Wage Gap Hub - NYS DOL Reports](#). Here, users can find even more resources (federal and state) on the topic, including interactive dashboards related to the childcare industry—a primary focus of our report, given the impact of the pandemic on women in caregiving roles.

Other critical topics we have highlighted as part of this data transparency initiative include generations in the workforce, business directory for jobseekers, child labor abuse case data <https://dol.ny.gov/child-labor-case-data> (in collaboration with our Worker Protection Division), green economy jobs (in collaboration with our Office of Just Energy Transition) and a self-sufficiency calculator for working-age families.

These dashboards have been well-received by the public and other workforce professionals. Though this initiative has been a major leap forward in helping stakeholders have immediate access to the information they want, our staff remains committed to providing more personalized one-on-one assistance. NYSDOL has knowledgeable labor market experts throughout the state—each serving as a resource in their respective communities.

The department will continue to develop these helpful tools, always remaining responsive to user feedback. We seek to improve and serve customers continuously according to their interests and needs. In February 2024, the DAC will receive the prestigious Data Insights and Innovation Award from the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA).

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FOIL

NYSDOL has instituted key operational changes that have allowed us to optimize personnel and resources and significantly reduce backlogs on FOIL requests. By re-establishing a formal Records Access Unit and transitioning our request process to a dedicated online platform (GovQA), we have significantly reduced the number of cases in our backlog and the time required to respond to complex requests. We maintained a steady workload so that staff could adequately manage and address potential bottlenecking issues immediately before new backlogs could accumulate, for example, by reassigning attorneys to review records while someone temporarily took leave or a vacation.

Worker Protection

NYSDOL's Worker Protection team has adopted transparency as an ethos by working diligently to publish more user-friendly guidance through FAQs and fact sheets online as new laws become effective. In so doing, the Department is helping to increase awareness of the employer community about their responsibilities and the worker community about their rights. While the Department has always engaged in this work, the changes we are making to create content that is easy to understand and readily accessible online and in different languages reflects our commitment to meeting people where they are. The Department is leveraging the work of our Division of Strategic Communications to help spread awareness through social media and other forms of engagement.

The Division's recent implementation of the New York State's Pay Transparency Law in September 2023 and the Workplace Violence Act (Schools) in January 2024 are two recent examples demonstrating these efforts.

Engage Community Partners

Intergovernmental Affairs

Following the pandemic, NYSDOL's Intergovernmental Affairs Division has taken a hands-on, collaborative approach to working with elected officials in New York State, ensuring constituents' needs are met. NYSDOL created the Elected Official Inquiry System, or EOIS, to best address questions from NYS Assembly and Senate Offices.

Any elected contacted by a constituent regarding an issue related to NYSDOL, whether it be a UI claim status or how to file a wage theft complaint, can use the online EOIS form to contact our Intergovernmental Affairs staff. This form is available to state, federal, and local legislators.

To date, 4,878 cases have been submitted through the EOIS, which recently expanded to include Chambers of Commerce and continues to expand to additional local municipalities.

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Since August 2023, NYSDOL's Intergovernmental Affairs staff have hosted eight virtual office-hour sessions for legislative staff. These sessions are meant to engage staff on how the Department can better serve constituents.

Business Advocacy

NYSDOL created the Office of Business Advocacy and Engagement to serve as a dedicated team that serves as a business ombudsman, ensuring timely communication and swift resolution of issues between businesses and various NYSDOL offices. The office is not intended to bypass regular administrative processes. However, the Business Advocacy and Engagement team prioritizes and expedites the resolution of businesses experiencing technological, administrative, and customer service roadblocks.

The Office has participated in four regional small business tours in Buffalo, Rochester, Utica, and Troy to ensure businesses statewide know about and can access the many free services that NYDOL offers. The Office has conducted over 20 in-person and virtual presentations to state-wide, regional, and local business associations, chambers of commerce, and community groups and assisted over 130 discreet inquiries for businesses and individuals who could not resolve their NYSDOL issues promptly.

The Office has also organized a statewide Small Business Advocacy tour aligning the business advocacy departments for other state agencies: Workers Compensation Board, Taxation and Finance, Department of State, and Empire State Development. This multi-agency group conducted combined business benefit workshops across western and central NY in 2023. This efficient and accessible operation has provided these regional workshops serving over 300 businesses and individuals in four of the state's ten regions thus far.

Strategic Communications

Our Division of Strategic Communications is committed to expanding its reach to the public regarding NYSDOL's work. The Department now maintains social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter/X, and a Spanish-language Facebook account. Our goal is to keep people well-informed about significant developments in the world of work. We strive to do it in a timely, understandable, and impactful manner, always meeting our customers' expectations. Our efforts have paid off, resulting in a substantial increase in our reach. In 2023:

- Over 8.5 million unique individuals visited NYSDOL's website, which received over 40 million views.
- NYSDOL sent over 1.2 billion emails, including newsletters and UI notifications. Almost 500 million of those emails included direct engagement with an individual.
- NYSDOL created eight separate newsletters for NYSDOL staff, employers, and workers. These newsletters go out to over 28 million recipients.
 - Newsletters include Your DOL, Business Buzz, Worker Protection Pulse, and the NYSDOL Federal Tax Information Quarterly.
- NYSDOL developed and released 292 videos, educating the public and training other state agencies on social media and the web.

INITIATIVES TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN 2024

Workforce Data and Research

The Office of Workforce Data and Research is an inter-agency project that aims to monitor the progress of the State's workforce development initiatives and associated labor supply over time. The data collected and analyses produced by this office will provide valuable insights into the outcomes of workforce development training and help identify which industries are experiencing labor shortages.

NYSDOL will collect data from various sources, including P-12 schools, higher education institutions, employers, and workforce development programs. This data will include job placement and wage data. By using advanced analytics to connect these data sources, NYSDOL plans to create a comprehensive overview of training trajectories. Additionally, predictive modeling will be infused to help the department identify the missing skills and workforce opportunities across different regions.

The data collected will help all stakeholders answer critical questions about outcomes and make better-informed decisions about the future of labor and work. This understanding will be widely shared to identify opportunities, pain points, and best practices for program development.

Presently, NYSDOL does not have industry-specific data on labor shortages. The Office of Workforce Data and Research will provide better knowledge of labor supply by industry, allowing the Department to predict labor shortages more accurately and share those predictions with the public.

Worker Protection

The Management System for Protecting Workers' Rights (MPWR)

This public-facing online resource allows workers and employers to apply for various NYSDOL-issued licenses and permits. In addition to providing a convenient single location for individuals to submit information, upload documentation, and pay online, the system also allows individuals to receive real-time updates about the status of their application or any issues with the application.

With 20 licenses and permits already being handled through MPWR, NYSDOL will continue to build out the system's capabilities, further enhancing the customer experience and transparency in our business processes. This system has also dramatically reduced application processing time for applicants, informing workers of their application status and putting them to work as soon as possible.

Investigations & Wage Recovery

Currently, the vast majority of the work we do in wage recovery is paper-based. The Department is working on developing innovative tools for investigators and claimants with the goal of creating an integrated system that does not rely solely on paper. From a transparency perspective, this entirely online and interactive system will help victims better understand the investigation process and more easily participate in the investigation. It will also help investigators manage caseloads more efficiently and correspond with targets of investigation more easily and timely.

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Launch of Modernized Unemployment (UI) System: Putting Customers First

Later this year, NYSDOL plans to unveil its new modernized UI system, focusing on customer experience and transparency throughout the business process.

The number one complaint we hear from customers is that they don't know what's happening with their claim. This new system addresses that criticism head on, by featuring real-time statuses/updates, all at their fingertips. The new system will be a one-stop shop for claimants to upload documents, understand program requirements, and learn claim status. In that way, it will provide greater transparency regarding the UI claim process, as all actions regarding a UI claim will take place in one centralized location.