

January 25, 2021

President Biden Signs Executive Order Addressing COVID Economic Relief and Minimum Wage

Today, President Biden signed two Executive Orders that focus on:

- Expanding food assistance, delivering stimulus checks to very low-income Americans and labor.
- Raising the minimum wage to \$15 for the federal workforce.

National Economic Council director Brian Deese called the orders a “critical lifeline” for millions of families at the White House Friday, noting that Biden also introduced a more comprehensive \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package earlier this month. The package would provide additional funds for vaccine production and distribution, unemployment insurance, stimulus checks and more.

“Our economy is at a very precarious moment,” Deese said. “It’s a moment that requires decisive action to beat this pandemic and support the economic recovery that American families need.”

Food Assistance, Stimulus Checks & Labor

Hunger Crisis

Through the Executive Order President Biden is asking USDA to consider taking the following steps to provide nutrition assistance to working families, including to:

- **Increase access to nutritious food for millions of children missing meals due to school closures.**
- President Biden is asking USDA to consider issuing new guidance increasing P-EBT benefits by approximately 15% to accurately reflect the costs of missing meals and make it easier for households to claim benefits.

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- **Allow larger emergency Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program allotments for the lowest-income households.**
- USDA will consider issuing new guidance that would allow states to increase SNAP emergency allotments for those who need it most.
- **Update food assistance benefits to reflect the true cost of a basic healthy diet**
- President Biden will ask USDA to consider beginning the process of revising the Thrifty Food Plan to better reflect the modern cost of a healthy basic diet.

Direct Payments

President Biden is asking the Department of Treasury to consider taking a series of actions to expand and improve delivery of Economic Impact Payments including:

- Establishing online tools for claiming their payments;
- Working to make sure that those who have not yet accessed their funds get the relief they deserve and;
- Analyzing unserved households to inform additional outreach efforts.

Labor

President Biden is asking the Department of Labor to consider clarifying that workers have a federally guaranteed right to refuse employment that will jeopardize their health and if they do so, they will still qualify for unemployment insurance.

Small Business

The Biden Administration is establishing a network of benefit delivery teams and a coordination structure across federal and state administered programs to reduce the time and burden to access urgent support that provides greater stability and builds towards an equitable recovery.

Minimum Wage

President Biden signed an Executive Order that:

- **Restores Collective Bargaining Power and Worker Protections**
 - Revokes Trump Executive Orders 13836, 13837, and 13839. It goes further to direct agencies to bargain over permissible, non-mandatory subjects of bargaining when contracts are up for negotiation.
- **Eliminates Schedule F**, the new excepted service classification Trump created via executive action in the last few months of his presidency.
 - Trump's EO allowed agency heads to reclassify certain policy-making positions into a new schedule of quasi-political appointees known as Schedule F. Career federal

employees would lose their civil service protections in the process, meaning their agency heads could have fired them — and hired new replacements — at will.

- President Biden's EO directs agencies to immediately suspend, revise and rescind any proposed actions, decisions or rules associated with the Schedule F order.

- **\$15 Minimum Wage for Federal Workers**

- The EO directs the Office of Personnel Management to develop recommendations to pay more federal employees at least \$15 per hour.

Related People

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