

NEWS BRIEF

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Biden Signals Ambitious Agenda With Sweeping Executive Order

On Jan. 22, 2021, President Joe Biden issued an executive order directing multiple government agencies to make efforts to curb the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The executive order was described as an “all-of-government effort” by the White House. The order aims to provide economic stability to Americans by outlining specific steps for government agencies to take.

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“Today, the president is issuing an executive order that will launch an all-of-government effort to provide equitable emergency economic relief to working families, communities, and small businesses across the nation.”

- The White House, in a statement

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Specifically, the executive order requests:

- That the **U.S. Department of Labor** considers clarifying that workers who refuse unsafe working conditions can still receive unemployment insurance
- That the **Treasury Department** considers changing its delivery structure to ensure a timely delivery of direct stimulus payments
- That the **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs** considers pausing federal collections on overpayments and debts

- That the **U.S. Department of Agriculture** considers expanding and extending federal nutrition assistance programs to curtail the growing hunger crisis
- That an interagency benefit coordination structure be created to enable effective and equitable distribution of government assistance

While the Biden administration acknowledges that Congress will need to help the relief effort in more concrete ways, it hopes these directives will help economic recovery in the meantime.

What's next?

The executive order falls short of mandating specific actions from government bodies, though the requests may be interpreted as such. In other words, it's unclear if and how quickly these agencies will accommodate the president's requests. Either way, these measures indicate the direction and scope of President Biden's ambitious pandemic recovery plan.

Employers should expect similar announcements in the near future as the Biden administration continues with its relief efforts.

