

Global Legislative Update

Law & Policy Group

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June 2025



In this document

Mercer's *Global Legislative Update* covers legal developments affecting retirement, health, executive rewards, talent, diversity and inclusion, and other HR programs that affect local and/or expatriate employees. Links to developments with upcoming effective dates covered in past updates are also included to remind employers of impending deadlines. These icons indicate whether employer action is required.



Employer action required



Potential implications for employers



Developments to monitor

Please note: Mercer is not a law firm and therefore cannot provide legal advice. Please consult legal counsel before taking any actions based on the commentary and recommendations in this report.

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Section 1

Highlights

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Chile	Pension reforms approved Minimum wage increased
Colombia	New guidelines for occupational medical valuations issued
Mexico	Most employers required to provide employees with seating during workday Employment rights of digital platform workers to be regulated
Panama	Social security fund, including pension benefits, revised
Peru	Withdrawal of employment benefits for terminal illness or cancer diagnosis issued
United States	Executive order on delivering most-favored nation prescription drug pricing to American patients issued Trump administration will not enforce 2024 mental health parity rule Department of Labor halts enforcement of 2024 independent contractor rule Department of Labor axes earlier warning about cryptocurrency in 401(k) plans Group health plan and hospital transparency guidance issued Equal Employment Opportunity Commission removes nonbinary employee reporting option House OKs HSA enhancements, paid leave employer tax credits, student loan provisions in budget bill 2025 state paid family and medical leave contributions and benefits roundup

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United States

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Americas (continued)	
United States	Paid family medical leave grant program, job protections expanded Personnel file disclosure requirements strengthened in Washington Law requiring employee notice before certain layoffs and closures in Washington Changes made to the long-term care coverage mandate in Washington Covered-lives assessment rates for fiscal year 2026 issued in Washington
Asia Pacific	
Australia	Australian Financial Complaints Authority publishes approaches to three key superannuation topics Second consultation on anti-money laundering/counter-terrorism financing reforms released
China	Unemployment insurance contribution refund policy extended Revised basic pension contribution amounts announced in Beijing Employers offered subsidy for hiring unemployed university graduates
Hong Kong	Minimum wage increased
Taiwan	Four new public holidays added Program that aims to boost work-family balance and female employment expanded
EMEA	
Bulgaria	Electronic employment register introduced
Egypt	Employment law to change
France	Advanced practice nurses may now prescribe sick leave for up to three days
Hungary	Electronic administration of social security records planned
Jordan	Doctors' fees to increase
Netherlands	Minimum wage to increase
United Arab Emirates	Health coverage for certain medical and health conditions clarified in Abu Dhabi
United Kingdom	The Pension Regulator annual funding statement published Many large workplace pension providers sign Mansion House Accord White paper on immigration, measures to reduce net migration issued Consultation on equality reforms issued

Section 2

Global

Artificial Intelligence	
Status	 Ongoing initiatives
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Roundup: Global employer resources on artificial intelligence</p> <p>Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become more of a permanent feature of the workplace for many employees and employers around the world and poses numerous challenges and considerations as it reshapes work. To help employers consider the issues associated with AI, the roundup cited below provides links to general information about ongoing legislative and governance initiatives and trends. Sources include Marsh McLennan, organizations, government websites, third-party analysis, news articles and viewpoints.</p>
Resources	Roundup , regularly updated
Minimum wage	
Status	 Ongoing initiatives
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Roundup: Global employer resources on minimum wage increases</p> <p>To help multinational employers address the different minimum wage rates around the world, the roundup cited below provides links to resources from organizations, government websites, third-party resources, and news articles.</p>
Resources	Roundup , regularly updated
Remote working	
Status	 Ongoing initiatives
Development	<p>Career — Health — Wealth</p> <p>Roundup: Countries address remote-working issues</p> <p>Remote working has become more of a permanent feature for many employees and employers after various countries introduced COVID-19 measures. Remote working poses challenges and considerations for employers devising or adjusting policies. Issues to consider include the definition of remote work, eligibility criteria, hybrid working arrangements, employee engagement and performance, cybersecurity, health and safety, the right to disconnect, the impact of employees relocating to a different country or state, and the post-pandemic return to the workplace. Several jurisdictions have introduced remote-working legislation that clarifies post-pandemic employer and employee requirements, and others are expected to follow suit. To help employers consider the issues associated with remote working, the roundup cited below provides links to resources from Marsh McLennan, organizations, government websites, third-party analysis, news articles and viewpoints.</p>
Resources	Roundup , regularly updated

Reproductive rights	
Status	 Ongoing initiatives
Development	Health Roundup: Global employer resources on reproductive rights post <i>Dobbs</i> ruling In June 2022, the US Supreme Court’s <i>Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization</i> decision overturned <i>Roe v. Wade</i> , finding no federal constitutional right to abortion and allowing states to regulate and ban abortions at all stages of pregnancy. To provide multinational employers some information on countries’ positions on reproductive rights and the varying employee health benefit plan issues involved, the roundup cited below provides links to organizations, government websites, third-party analysis, news articles and viewpoints.
Resources	Roundup , regularly updated
Right to disconnect	
Status	 Ongoing initiatives
Development	Career Roundup: Right to disconnect around the world In recent years, several countries have enacted legislation requiring employers to allow employees the “right to disconnect” — or to “switch off” from work-related electronic communications (such as emails) outside of their normal working hours. ... To help employers consider the issues associated with the right to disconnect, this roundup provides links to general information about countries’ legislative/regulatory governance initiatives and trends. Sources include organizations, government websites, third-party resources and news articles.
Resources	Roundup , regularly updated

Section 3

Americas

Bolivia (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career Minimum wage increased The monthly minimum wage increased on May 1, 2025, to 2,750 BOB, up from 2,500 BOB.</p>
Resources	Announcement (Spanish) (Government, April 28, 2025)
Brazil (new)	
Status	 Compliance deadline is postponed until May 26, 2026.
Development	<p>Career — Health Inclusion of psychosocial risks in risk management process postponed Employers in Brazil now have until May 26, 2026, to ensure that their Risk Management Program (PGR) includes psychosocial risks related to the work environment — the effective date is one year later than originally notified. The PGR is included in Ordinance 1,419 of Aug. 27, 2024, and forms part of employers' occupational risk management process (GRO) — currently it covers several workplace safety and health risks, such as risks arising from physical, chemical, biological, accidents and ergonomic factors. Employers must develop an inventory of risks (this must be retained for 20 years) and adopt measures to eliminate or reduce occupational risks. The Brazilian safety and health authorities have provided a nonexhaustive list of common psychosocial risks including work content and design; workload and pace; work scheduling; employees' control over their work; equipment provision to perform work; organizational culture (including harassment); career development; and work-life balance.</p>
Resources	Announcement (Portuguese) (Ministry of Labor, May 15, 2025)
Brazil (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Wealth Increased IOF rates affect VGBL-type pension plans Changes to the tax on financial transactions (IOF), effective May 23, 2025, were included in Decree No. 12, 466 of 2025 and will affect life insurance plans with survival coverage, particularly VGBL-type pension plans. With the new decree, a 5% IOF rate will apply to monthly contributions made for funding VGBL plans whenever the total amount contributed by the policyholder exceeds BRL\$ 50,000 in a month, even if distributed among different insurers or entities.</p>
Resources	<p>regina.recchia@mercer.com Decree No. 12, 466 of 2025 (Portuguese) (Official Diary, May 22, 2025)</p>

Brazil (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development **Career**
[Measures gradually reintroduce the payroll tax](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026

Canada — British Columbia (previously covered, now effective)

Status  **Currently effective**

Development **Career**
Minimum wage increased
 On June 1, the general hourly minimum wage increased to C\$17.85, up from C\$17.40.

Resources [2025 minimum wage increases confirmed](#) (Government, Feb. 14, 2025)

Canada — Manitoba (new)

Status  **Consultation is open until June 25, 2025.**

Development **Wealth**
Consultation on Pension Benefits Act Review
 The Pension Commission of Manitoba issued a Consultation Paper on potential areas of changes to The Pension Benefits Act as part of the legislative requirement to review the Act at least once every five years and report its findings to the Minister of Labour and Immigration.
 The potential legislative areas to be considered are expanding current unlocking provisions; improving defined benefit and defined contribution (DC) pension plans to encourage new plans and/or to improve or facilitate administration of existing plans; allowing DC plans to offer Variable Life Payment Annuities (VPLAs) as part of a member’s payment options upon employment termination; and adopting annuity discharge legislation.

Resources jared.mickall@mercer.com
[Consultation information](#) (Department of Labour and Immigration, May 12, 2025)

Canada (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development **Career**

- [Rights of digital platform workers enhanced in Ontario](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [Minimum wage to increase in Manitoba](#) — key date: Oct. 1, 2025
- [Minimum wage to increase in Prince Edward Island](#) — key date: Oct. 1, 2025
- [Pay transparency duties to start in Ontario](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Employers face required disclosures regarding pay in Ontario](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026

Career — Health

- [New leave entitlements in Ontario](#) — key date: Lieutenant Governor will proclaim effective date
- [‘Right-to-disconnect’ established for employees](#) — key date: Slated to take effect in 2025

Wealth

- [Information security guidelines issued in British Columbia](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [Pension super priority federal legislation enacted](#) — key date: April 27, 2027

Chile (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Wealth</p> <p>Pension reforms approved</p> <p>Pension reforms in Chile were approved on Jan. 29, 2025, and mark the most significant change to the system since the establishment of the PGU (Universal Guaranteed Pension) in 1981. The new pension model has short- and medium-term implications for companies, workers and pensions. The measures include increased employer contributions, the introduction of generational funds, increased PGU benefit and more competition on pension fund fees. Highlights of the reforms include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new employers' contribution (7%), calculated on the employee's taxable income, will be phased-in over a nine to 11-year period, with the first increase (1%) levied in August 2025. This contribution is additional to the 1.6% already paid to the disability and survivors' insurance. The contribution will be divided between each worker's individual capitalization account (4.5%); loan to the state with guaranteed returns (1.5%) that aims to improve current pension benefits (this amount will be temporary and inheritable); and an additional 1% allocated to the Social Security System (Disability, Survivorship, and Life Expectancy Insurance). • An increased pension benefit of UF 0.1/month for each year of contributions (women must have a minimum contribution period of 10 years, and men must have 20 years, capped at UF 2.5/month). The UF is the "unidad de fomento" that provides an inflation-indexed unit of account, calculated and published by the National Statistics Institute of Chile. • A compensation payment for longer life expectancy will be paid to women from age 65. The benefit aims to encourage women to remain in work for longer and could provide an 11% boost to the self-financed pension, with a minimum of UF 0.25/month. • The PGU will progressively increase to CLP \$250,000 gross/month (up from CLP 224,000), depending on the beneficiary's age. • Competition on fees among the pension fund administrators (AFP) will start with a public tender in August 2027. Every two years, 10% of pensioners' accounts will be randomly reassigned to the AFP that charges the lowest commission. • The multi-fund scheme will be replaced by Target Date Funds (TDF) within two years. Individuals will not be permitted to choose the fund in which their mandatory savings are invested. The funds will automatically change according to the beneficiary's age. • Establishment of a centralized system for collecting unpaid contributions for all AFPs.
Resources	<p>joaquin.ramirez@mercer.com</p> <p>Law (Spanish) (Official Diary, March 26, 2025)</p>

Chile (new)**Status**  **Currently effective****Development****Career****Minimum wage increased**

The minimum wage increased to 529,000 CLP/month on May 1, 2025, up from 510,636 CLP/month. The minimum wage is slated to increase again to 539,000 CLP/month on Jan. 1, 2026. Since January 2025, the Consumer Price Index registered during the last six months of the previous calendar year is used to calculate changes to the minimum wage.

Resources

[Announcement](#) (Spanish) (Ministry of Labor, May 1, 2025)

Colombia (new)**Status**  **Currently effective****Development****Career — Health****New guidelines for occupational medical valuations issued**

Colombia's Ministry of Labor has introduced Resolution 1843 of 2025 that updates and consolidates the regulatory framework for occupational medical evaluations in the workplace. The resolution is applicable to all workers (including contractors, dependent and independent workers) and across all industry sectors. Highlights of the Resolution include:

- Employers must generally conduct occupational medical evaluations every three years and at various stages of the employment relationship, including pre-employment, follow-up evaluations, employment termination, following medical leave, assignment to new roles, during job relocation and other situations that may impact workers' health.
- Employers pay for the cost of occupational medical evaluations and any supplementary tests scheduled during working hours. Employers must implement any recommended workplace adjustments within a maximum period of 20 working days.
- Employers must not use pregnancy or HIV testing as a condition for hiring or continued employment, except in cases where specific, proven, or potential occupational risks justify such testing.
- Employees' occupational medical records are confidential for a minimum period of 20 years.
- Companies have six months from May 6, 2025, to comply with the new measures.

Resources

[Resolution 1843 of 2025](#) (Spanish) (Ministry of Labor, May 6, 2025)

Colombia (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)**Development****Wealth**

- [Pension reforms issued](#) — key date: July 1, 2025

Mexico (new)	
Status	 Effective June 17, 2025
Development	<p>Career — Health</p> <p>Most employers required to provide employees with seating during workday</p> <p>From June 17, 2025, employers in Mexico must provide chairs with backrests for their employees to use either when working or when resting during their workday. Employers will have an additional 180 days (by Dec. 14, 2025) to make changes to their internal work rules to include this new requirement. The measures are included in amendments to the Federal Labor Code published on Dec. 19, 2025.</p> <p>The requirement to provide seating will apply to commercial establishments, service sectors and similar companies. Manufacturing facilities may be exempt depending on the nature of the work.</p> <p>Additionally, the law will prohibit employers from requiring that employees stand during their entire shift and prohibit them from sitting periodically while working. Employers will have to provide employees with seating in dedicated rest areas, and financial penalties will apply for breaches of the law. The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare is expected to issue corresponding implementing regulations on occupational risk factors.</p>
Resources	Decree (Spanish) (Official Diary, Dec. 19, 2024)

Mexico (previously covered, soon to be effective)**Status****Effective June 22, 2025****Development****Career — Health****Employment rights of digital platform workers to be regulated**

The employment rights of platform workers will be regulated under measures that amend the Federal Labour Law, effective June 22, 2025 — 180 days following their publication in the Official Journal on Dec. 24, 2024. A digital platform employee is an individual who provides personal, remunerated and subordinated services through a digital platform, and who earns a net monthly income from their work equivalent to at least the minimum wage applicable in Mexico City (MXN\$8,364/month for 2025). Individuals earning less than the minimum monthly wage will be classified as independent employees, and platform operators must register them with the Mexican Social Security Institute. Highlights include:

- Working hours are defined as the time effectively worked (from when employee accepts a task until its completion).
- Platform operators must have procedures for training platform workers on the effective use of the platform and for tracking workers' standby and working time. They must set out the safety and health policies to be followed; explain how tasks are paid; establish a complaints procedure to be used by employees; register workers with the Mexican Social Security Institute; and pay contributions to the National Workers' Housing Fund.
- Platform workers must be paid weekly, and employers must issue payment receipts. Payments must include prorated amounts for mandatory benefits, such as rest days, vacations, vacation premium, Christmas bonus and overtime. Tips cannot be included in the calculation of social security contributions.
- Individual employment contracts that differ from the terms and conditions commonly defined by digital platforms must be registered and authorized by the Federal Center for Labor Conciliation and Registration. Contracts must include details about remuneration, work equipment, safety conditions and supervision arrangements.
- Platform workers whose work exceeds 288 hours in any tax year will have the right to participate in companies' profits.
- Digital platform operators must implement an algorithmic work management policy that explains the operation of the algorithms used to assign tasks and activities, communicate it to employees from the start of the employment relationship and ensure that employees sign and accept the policy. The operator must ensure that any changes to the policy, are communicated in a timely manner.
- An indemnity payment must be paid on the termination of a platform worker. Termination without employer liability will be permitted if the platform worker's conduct compromises the safety or privacy of digital platform users, and if they had not complied with assigned tasks or work-related instructions. The employment relationships will be automatically terminated if a platform worker ceases their activity for 30 consecutive calendar days.
- Platform operators must issue the procedure to follow when addressing or reviewing decisions that affect or interrupt the connection, linkage or access to the digital platform.

The Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS) must publish proposals to reform the Social Security Law by around June 22, 2025 — 180 days from date of publication — and the National Workers' Housing Fund must publish rules concerning digital platform operators.

Resources

[Decree](#) (Spanish) (Official Diary, Dec. 24, 2024)

Panama (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Health — Wealth Social security fund, including pension benefits, revised</p> <p>Changes to Panama’s social security fund took effect on March 18, 2025, increase employee contributions and establish the Unified Solidarity Fund (USF) managed by the Social Security Fund (CSS). The measures are included in Law 462. Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributions for disability, old age and death are now deposited in the USF, including those from the defined benefit subsystem, the mixed subsystem and the new unified capitalization system with a solidarity guarantee. • Transitional mechanisms allow insured individuals currently enrolled in the defined benefit and mixed systems to voluntarily transfer to the new system by March 18, 2026. The transfer decision is irrevocable. • The employer contribution rate will gradually increase. The first contribution rate increase to 13.25% took effect in April and was calculated on the May payroll. The contribution rate will increase to 14.25% on March 1, 2027, and to 15.25% on March 1, 2029. The workers’ contribution rate remains unchanged at 9.75%. • A new method for calculating pension benefits is introduced. • Other changes include new governance rules, stronger oversight mechanisms and monitoring arrangements.
Resources	Law 462 (Spanish) (Official Gazette, March 18, 2025)
Panama (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer social security contributions increased — key date: March 1, 2027,
Peru (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Health Withdrawal of employment benefits for terminal illness or cancer diagnosis issued</p> <p>Workers in Peru can withdraw their employment benefits (CTS) in full (the deposit and accrued interest) if they receive a cancer or a terminal illness diagnosis. The measures are included in Law No. 32322 and aims to help individuals with their economic needs following such a diagnosis. Previously, workers could make partial withdrawals (up to 50%) from their CTS funds. Furthermore, as an exceptional measure, employees can access their CTS funds until Dec. 31, 2026, without having to prove illness. The CTS is a legal benefit or settlement payment given to employees on their retirement for their time spent working for a company.</p>
Resources	Law No. 32322 (Spanish) (Official Diary, May 9, 2025)
Peru (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Career — Wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pension system modernization law issued — key date: unknown

United States (US) (new)**Status****Currently effective****Development****Health****Executive order on delivering most-favored nation prescription drug pricing to American patients**

On May 12, 2025, President Trump signed an executive order aimed at implementing most-favored-nation (MFN) pricing for prescription drugs. This order builds upon a previous executive order that directed various federal agencies to pursue a range of policies designed to lower prescription drug prices for Americans. No immediate action is required from employer group health plans.

In the President's words, the purpose of the order is to "equalize" pharmaceutical costs across all comparably developed countries. This contrasts with the current situation in which the President argues Americans subsidize prescription drugs and biologics in other developed countries by paying higher prices for the same medications in the United States.

The President instructed government officials to establish MFN pricing targets and communicate these targets to drug manufacturers within 30 days (June 11). If the MFN pricing targets do not lead to "significant progress" in achieving MFN pricing for American patients, then the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) would propose a rule to implement MFN pricing, to the extent permitted by law. Similarly, other agencies would be directed to take other measures to significantly reduce the cost of prescription drugs and end anticompetitive practices. Although the executive order is not entirely clear, it seems that MFN pricing would apply to Medicare, Medicaid, and the commercial market.

Additionally, the Secretary of HHS is tasked with creating a direct-to-consumer purchasing program that enables American patients to purchase their medications directly from pharmaceutical manufacturers at MFN prices.

If successful, MFN pricing could have a substantial and positive financial impact on Americans, particularly those covered by Medicare or Medicaid. The effect on U.S. companies offering prescription drug benefits remains uncertain at this early stage.

It is worth noting that the first Trump administration proposed a similar initiative regarding MFN pricing for pharmaceuticals, but those efforts were blocked in court and ultimately rescinded by the Biden administration.

Resources

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[Delivering most-favored-nation prescription drug pricing to American patients](#) (The White House, May 12, 2025); [Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump announces actions to put American patients first by lowering drug prices and stopping foreign free-riding on American pharmaceutical innovation](#) (The White House, May 12, 2025) and [Lowering drug prices by once again putting Americans first](#) (The White House, April 15, 2025)

US (new)**Status**  **Currently effective****Development****Health****Trump administration will not enforce 2024 mental health parity rule**

The Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Treasury have announced that they will not enforce the 2024 final mental health parity rule for any compliance failures that occur before a final ruling in the ERISA Industry Committee's lawsuit challenging the rule, or during the following 18 months. This is encouraging news for many employers, as the 2024 rule introduces significant new compliance requirements for group health plan sponsors, including the meaningful benefits requirement, fiduciary certifications for ERISA plans, and evaluations of outcomes data. However, it is essential to remember that employer plan sponsors must still comply with the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act, which mandates a written comparative analysis of nonquantitative treatment limitations.

Resources

[Administration won't enforce 2024 mental health parity](#) (Mercer, May 15, 2025)
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US (new)**Status**  **Currently effective****Development****Career****Department of Labor halts enforcement of 2024 independent contractor rule**

The Department of Labor (DOL) announced in a Field Assistance Bulletin issued on May 1, 2025, that it will no longer enforce a 2024 Biden-era independent contractor rule under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). DOL said it will reconsider the rule, including whether to rescind the regulation. In the meantime, DOL will enforce the independent contractor misclassification in accordance with a 2008 Fact Sheet, and as further informed by Opinion Letter FLSA 2019-6.

Resources

[Roundup: Employer resources on DOL's final independent contractor rule](#) (Mercer, regularly updated)

US (new)**Status**  **Currently effective****Development****Wealth****Department of Labor axes earlier warning about cryptocurrency in 401(k) plans**

The Department of Labor (DOL) rescinded its 2022 guidance cautioning 401(k) plan fiduciaries about offering cryptocurrency and other digital assets — including tokens, coins, and other derivative products — as an investment option for participants. In Compliance Assistance Release (CAR) 2025-01, DOL explains that rescinding that guidance restores the agency's historically neutral approach to particular investment types and strategies. The agency notes that fiduciaries should consider all relevant facts and circumstances when evaluating any potential investment, noting that these decisions will "necessarily be context specific." However, DOL doesn't explain what facts and circumstances are relevant for fiduciaries considering investments in digital assets.

Resources

margaret.berger@mercer.com and matthew.calloway@mercer.com
[GRIST](#), May 30, 2025

US (new)	
Status	 Effective dates vary.
Development	<p>Health</p> <p>Group health plan and hospital transparency guidance issued</p> <p>On May 22, 2025, agencies issued guidance related to the Transparency in Coverage (TiC) final rules and the hospital price transparency final rules in response to the President’s executive order (#14221) from February, which focused on enhancing transparency in healthcare. The executive order outlined the Trump administration’s goals of promoting clear and accurate healthcare pricing, increasing enforcement of transparency requirements, and potentially expanding existing mandates. Specifically, the Departments of Treasury, HHS and DOL were directed to require disclosure of actual prices, not estimates; issue updated guidance or propose rules to standardize price information and update enforcement policies. In their latest FAQ, the Departments indicated their intention to address concerns regarding machine readable files (MRFs) by issuing Schema 2.0. This will implement revised technical requirements for the in-network and out-of-network MRFs. According to the FAQ, Schema 2.0 is expected to reduce file size by excluding duplicative data and unnecessary fields, while also providing updates to better contextualize the data. Additionally, they are considering rulemaking to further refine and improve upon the MRF requirements under the TiC Final Rules. Schema 2.0 should be released on GitHub by Oct. 1, 2025, with compliance required by Feb. 2, 2026.</p> <p>The Departments also issued a Request for Information (RFI) related to the prescription drug MRF, seeking public input on the prescription drug price disclosure requirements. This includes information on existing prescription drug file data elements and general implementation issues, such as health plans’ ability to access necessary data for reporting, as well as state approaches and innovation. Currently, group health plans aren’t required to post a prescription drug MRF. Comments are due 30 days from the publication of the RFI in the Federal Register.</p> <p>CMS has issued guidance to strengthen the Hospital Price Transparency requirements, mandating that hospitals post the actual prices for items and services, rather than estimates. This guidance appears to be effective immediately. CMS has also released its own RFI to gather public feedback on how to enhance hospital compliance and enforcement, ensuring that shared data is accurate and complete. Comments are due by July 21, 2025.</p>
Resources	<p>cheryl.hughes@mercer.com</p> <p>Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Treasury announce move to strengthen healthcare price transparency (Department of Labor, May 22, 2025)</p>
US (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Equal Employment Opportunity Commission removes nonbinary employee reporting option</p> <p>The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has removed the option to report nonbinary employees in their EEO-1 filings. The 2024 EEO-1 Component 1 data collection instructions states “only binary options (i.e., male or female) for reporting employee counts.” The EEOC opened the 2024 EEO-1 Component 1 data collection on May 20, 2025, and the deadline to file is June 24, 2025. In her announcement, the Acting Chair reiterated the EEOC’s stance against diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) measures in the workplace.</p>
Resources	Instruction Booklet (EEOC) and 2024 EEO-1 Component 1 data collection (EEOC)

US (new)	
Status	 Proposal
Development	<p>Career — Health</p> <p>House OKs HSA enhancements, paid leave employer tax credits, student loan provisions in budget bill</p> <p>House Republicans passed a sweeping tax and budget reconciliation package (the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act,” HR 1) by a single vote on May 22, 2025, that, in good news for plan sponsors, makes no changes to the tax-favored treatment of employer-provided healthcare benefits.</p> <p>While the bill must now be considered by the Senate where it will undergo changes, we are keeping our eye on a host of employer-friendly provisions that would expand eligibility and uses for Health Savings Accounts and Health Reimbursement Arrangements, extend and enhance the employer tax credit for paid family and medical leave, and extend employers’ ability to provide tax-free educational assistance.</p> <p>An extension of pandemic-related telehealth flexibility for High-Deductible Health Plans is not in the measure.</p> <p>The Senate is set to consider the House-passed bill when lawmakers return to Washington next week. Republican House and Senate leaders are aiming to pass a final bill by July 4, 2025, though that timeline could slip given the difficult negotiations ahead. Whether a final bill will keep, change, or add to the House bill’s health and welfare provisions is uncertain. Under the budget reconciliation process, legislation is not subject to a Senate filibuster and can pass with a simple majority (51 votes, or 50 votes with the vice president as tiebreaker), but only if all its provisions have a direct impact on the federal budget.</p>
Resources	<p>geoff.manville@mercer.com and dorian.smith@mercer.com</p> <p>US Health News (Mercer, May 29, 2025)</p>
US (new)	
Status	 Effective dates vary.
Development	<p>Career — Health</p> <p>2025 state paid family and medical leave contributions and benefits</p> <p>Mandates requiring paid leave for an employee’s own health condition exist in many states — California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island and Washington — along with Puerto Rico and Washington, DC. Delaware, Maine, Maryland and Minnesota will start similar programs in the next few years. Except for Hawaii and Puerto Rico, these jurisdictions also require paid family leave. Voluntary group family leave insurance is now available in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, Michigan, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. Private employers may opt-in to the state program for governmental employees in New Hampshire and Vermont.</p>
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com and katharine.marshall@mercer.com</p> <p>GRIST, updated Jan. 29, 2025 and Paid family and medical leave: Snapshots across the US (Mercer, January 2025)</p>

US

Status  **Currently effective**

Development

Career — Health

Domestic partner benefits remain popular but present challenges

Domestic partner benefits continue to be common among many employers. However, compliance complexities present challenges for employers. The GRIST cited below (with minor updates and clarifications) reviews the major issues, particularly related to taxation and documentation, and provides useful tools, including a tax dependent flow chart, an employer domestic partner checklist and two tables summarizing applicable state laws.

Resources

rich.glass@mercer.com and patty.cartwright@mercer.com
[GRIST](#), regularly updated

US

Status  **Currently effective**

Development

Health

Beyond COBRA: State laws add complexity to continuation coverage

Though COBRA has endured for decades, state continuation laws are its less familiar sidekick. These laws (often referred to as “mini-COBRA” laws), fill in COBRA’s gaps, particularly for small employers offering fully insured group health plans as well as fully insured large-employer group health plans (often referred to as “post-COBRA” laws), where coverage is required beyond COBRA’s normal time frames. The GRIST cited below summarizes the major aspects of state continuation requirements.

Resources

rich.glass@mercer.com
[GRIST](#), Nov. 12, 2024

US

Status

**Currently effective**

Development

Health**Group fixed-indemnity plans pose legal, tax issues**

Concerns that fixed-indemnity plans may too easily be mistaken for comprehensive medical coverage or may improperly treat some benefit payments as tax free has led to a final rule from the departments of Labor, Treasury, and Health and Human Services. The rule requires fixed-indemnity plans to supply a new consumer notice beginning in 2025 but omits more sweeping proposals that would have required many employers to redesign their fixed-indemnity coverage. Treasury proposals to clarify the tax treatment of employer-provided accident and health plans — particularly the tax treatment of fixed-indemnity plans — also were left out of the final rule. The GRIST cited below provides background information about group fixed-indemnity plans, details about the new consumer notice, an overview of proposals left out of the final rule, and a summary of IRS guidance identifying a variety of fixed-indemnity designs (often paired with a wellness program) as improper “double dipping” schemes. This article also summarizes provisions in the rule addressing individual fixed-indemnity plans and short-term limited duration insurance.

Resources

jennifer.wiseman@mercer.com and cheryl.hughes@mercer.com
[GRIST](#), Aug. 27, 2024

US

Status

**Effective dates vary.**

Development

Wealth**User’s guide to SECURE 2.0**

A dizzying array of legislation affecting defined contribution (DC) and defined benefit (DB) plans became law on Dec. 29, 2022, as part of a fiscal 2023 government spending package. Capping several years of congressional efforts, the SECURE 2.0 Act of 2022 (Div. T of Pub. L. No. 117-328) is intended to build on changes made by the Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement (SECURE) Act of 2019 (Div. O of Pub. L. No. 116-94).

Navigating SECURE 2.0 is a formidable challenge. The statute consists of 120 pages of text and 90 individual sections — with no table of contents. To help employers and plan sponsors understand the legislation’s implications, this guide provides a high-level summary of SECURE 2.0 provisions grouped topically, including separate treatment of provisions specific to DC and DB plans.

The six tables in this guide describe statutory changes and their effective dates, identify whether the changes are mandatory or optional for employers, and provide initial observations, including implementation challenges for which agency guidance would be helpful. The act also includes several apparent drafting errors for which Congress intends to introduce technical corrections legislation. Those errors are noted in the relevant sections of the guide.

This guide doesn’t address SECURE 2.0’s employee stock ownership plan (ESOP) provisions and a handful of other non-benefit-related provisions. When referring to the original SECURE Act, this guide uses the term “SECURE 1.0” to avoid any confusion between the laws.

This guide will be updated periodically to reflect additional information and guidance.

Resources

margaret.berger@mercer.com, matthew.calloway@mercer.com and brian.kearney@mercer.com
[User’s guide to SECURE 2.0](#), periodically updated

US	
Status	 Effective dates vary.
Development	<p>Career — Health</p> <p>Transportation plans offer valued benefits, but pose compliance issues</p> <p>Since 1998, employees have been able to pay for qualified transportation fringe benefits through pretax salary reductions under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) § 132(f), and these benefits have become quite popular. (Employers could provide this benefit on a tax-advantaged basis as early as 1992.) The tax exemption extends to commuting expenses for transit passes, qualified parking, van pools, and in certain years, bicycles.</p> <p>While these benefits are not subject to cafeteria plan or ERISA rules, compliance difficulties exist, and a 2018 tax law that will expire at the end of 2025 added complexities. The federal monthly limits are adjusted every year, most recently for 2024. Some state and local jurisdictions have imposed employer mandates — including one that applies to Chicago-area employers starting in 2024 — leveraging the tax advantage of commuter benefits — other jurisdictions provide tax-related incentives.</p>
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com and cheryl.hughes@mercer.com</p> <p>GRIST, regularly updated</p>

US	
Status	 Effective dates vary.
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Roundup: Employer resources on noncompete restrictions</p> <p>Noncompete agreements prevent former employees from working for a competing employer or starting a competing business for a certain time after their employment ends. At the federal level, former President Biden, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and Congress have attempted to ban or limit the use of noncompete agreements. The FTC’s final rule banning noncompetes was scheduled to be effective Sept. 4, 2024, but on Aug. 20, 2024, a federal judge in Texas blocked the rule from taking effect nationwide. While the FTC has appealed the ruling, the rule will remain on hold until a future judicial decision either permanently blocks it or upholds it as lawful. The rule has been challenged in other lawsuits, with conflicting results. These divergent rulings and the impact of the recent Supreme Court Loper decision that overturned the “Chevron doctrine” of deference to federal agencies have led to employer uncertainty as to how to proceed. The Trump administration may also affect the fate of noncompetition provisions.</p> <p>At the state level, several states have generally banned noncompete agreements. Numerous other states have enacted restrictions, such as only allowing noncompete agreements for employees above a certain salary threshold. This roundup focuses on recent federal and state actions to restrict noncompete provisions and provides links to federal and state resources from organizations, government websites, third-party resources and news articles.</p>
Resources	<p>Roundup, regularly updated</p>

US	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Roundup: Employer resources on the changing landscape of DEI</p> <p>In June 2023, the US Supreme Court in <i>Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College</i> ruled colleges' use of race as a factor in student admissions is unconstitutional under the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause. Since the decision, various viewpoints have emerged on the ruling's effect on companies' diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs. While the Biden administration actively supported affirmative action and various DEI initiatives, President Trump's administration has adopted a firm stance against DEI programs in both the federal government and private sectors, issuing several executive orders (EOs) to limit these efforts. This roundup provides links to government information, third-party analyses, news articles and viewpoints about the varying aspects and issues to consider regarding employers' DEI programs.</p>
Resources	Roundup , regularly updated
US	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Roundup: Employer resources on DOL's expansion of overtime protections</p> <p>This roundup provides some information on the US Department of Labor's (DOL) final rule that would have significantly expanded overtime protections. This rule has been challenged in multiple lawsuits, and on Nov. 15, 2024, a Texas federal district court judge vacated and set aside the final rule on a nationwide basis — holding that it exceeded the DOL's statutory authority under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). As a result, the 2025 increases did not go into effect, and the July 2024 increases were revoked. On Feb. 28, 2025, the DOL appealed a December 2024 Texas federal court's decision that also blocked the rule. Both cases were appealed to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. This roundup provides links to government information, third-party analyses, news articles and viewpoints. The aggregated content in each section is organized in reverse chronological order and is by no means comprehensive. The content also does not necessarily reflect Mercer's or the authors' point of view on the subject.</p>
Resources	Roundup , regularly updated
US — States	
Status	 Compliance dates vary.
Development	<p>Health</p> <p>Some states require group health plan sponsor reporting</p> <p>Several states and localities have group health plan reporting requirements. The GRIST cited below summarizes key reporting mandates in three categories: individual health coverage mandates, health plan assessments and surcharges, and other types of reporting. This year, a new table was added to describe individual tax liability for failure to maintain minimum essential coverage (MEC) in the five states (plus Washington, DC) that impose MEC mandates.</p>
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com and dorian.smith@mercer.com GRIST , regularly updated

US — States	
Status	 Effective dates vary.
Development	<p>Wealth</p> <p>Resources for tracking state and local retirement initiatives</p> <p>This article summarizes state and local retirement initiatives for private-sector workers and rounds up relevant Mercer and third-party resources. This listing is updated periodically and may not always reflect the latest development in every locality.</p>
Resources	margaret.berger@mercer.com and brian.kearney@mercer.com GRIST , regularly updated

US — States	
Status	 Effective dates vary.
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Roundup: Employer resources on states' recent equal pay laws</p> <p>The federal Equal Pay Act of 1963 requires that men and women in the same workplace receive equal pay for equal work. In recent years, many states have taken further efforts to address equal pay, such as enacting laws that prohibit employers from asking job applicants about salary history, requiring disclosure of salary ranges and pay data, protecting employees who disclose their pay, expanding equal pay protections for characteristics other than sex, and broadening comparisons of work and pay. In 2023, New Jersey and Illinois expanded equal pay protections to temporary workers. Stronger federal legislation — the Paycheck Fairness Act — was first introduced in 1997 but has not passed after numerous attempts — most recently in June 2021. This roundup primarily focuses on recent state legislative initiatives pertaining to salary history bans and salary range disclosure requirements that affect private sector employers, and provides links to state resources from organizations, government websites, third-party resources and news articles. Certain cities have also acted, but they are generally beyond the scope of this roundup.</p>
Resources	Roundup , regularly updated

US — States	
Status	 Effective dates vary.
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Roundup: Employer resources on states' recreational marijuana laws</p> <p>Twenty-four states, plus Guam and Washington, DC, have legalized the possession and personal use of marijuana for recreational purposes. To provide employers with some information on states' actions and the varying employment considerations involved, this roundup provides links to organizations, government websites, third-party analysis, news articles and viewpoints on marijuana usage for recreational purposes. Thirty-eight states, plus Guam, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands and Washington, DC, have legalized marijuana use for medical purposes, but this roundup focuses on legal recreational marijuana use and its implications for employers. The aggregated content in each section is organized in reverse chronological order and is by no means comprehensive. It also does not necessarily reflect Mercer's or the authors' point of view on the subject.</p>
Resources	Roundup , regularly updated

US — States

Status  **Effective dates vary.**

Development **Career**
Roundup: Employer resources on minimum wage increases
 On March 14, 2025, President Trump rescinded former President Biden’s April 2021 executive order requiring federal contractors to pay a \$15 hourly minimum wage to workers for new federal contract solicitations starting Jan. 30, 2022, and increasing to \$17.75/hour in 2025. Federal appeals courts have different positions on the legality of the 2021 order, and the Department of Labor rules implementing the order remain in place. Executive Order 13658 — which was implemented by the Obama administration and currently requires federal contractors to pay \$13.30/hour — also remains. Numerous states have taken action to gradually increase the minimum wage to at least \$15/hour for most employees. To help employers prepare and address related issues, this roundup provides links to federal and state resources from organizations, government websites, third-party resources and news articles.

Resources [Roundup](#), regularly updated

US — States

Status  **Effective dates vary.**

Development **Career**
Roundup: Employer resources on hairstyle nondiscrimination laws
 The Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair (CROWN) Act movement in the United States aims to prohibit discrimination based on natural hair texture or hairstyles normally associated with race, such as braids, locks, twists, curls, cornrows, Afros, head wraps or bantu knots. The official campaign of the CROWN Act is led by the CROWN Coalition. Federal legislation, supported by the Biden administration, passed the House during the last session of Congress — but was not enacted. Many states have already passed CROWN Acts, and many others are considering legislation. To help employers ensure their employee handbooks and appearance policies are nondiscriminatory and comply with federal, state, and local laws, the roundup cited below provides links to federal and state resources from organizations, government websites, third-party analysis, news articles and viewpoints.

Resources [Roundup](#), regularly updated

US — California (new)**Status**  **Effective dates vary.****Development****Health****Multiemployer welfare arrangements laws enacted**

California enacted two laws related to multiple-employer welfare arrangements (MEWAs). They are:

- 2024 Ch. 398 (AB 2434). Previously, state law allowed association health plans (AHPs) — a type of MEWA — with large group coverage to offer coverage to employers in the small group market if the AHP met certain requirements, including establishment of the AHP before March 23, 2010. The law — applicable to healthcare service plans (including HMOs) — was set to expire on Jan. 1, 2026. The new law changes the establishment date to Jan. 1, 1966. The new law also requires MEWA registration by June 1, 2025. These provisions are set to expire on Jan. 1, 2030.
- 2024 Ch. 374 (AB 2072). This bill authorizes the Departments of Managed Health and Insurance to analyze the impact of MEWAs on the small group market and publish a report by July 1, 2026. Authorization for approved MEWAs — set to expire on Jan. 1, 2026 — will also be extended to Jan. 1, 2030.

Resources

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[2024 Ch. 398](#) (AB 2434) (Legislature, Sept. 22, 2024) and [2024 Ch. 374](#) (AB 2072) (Legislature)

US — California — San Francisco (new)**Status**  **Effective July 1, 2025****Development****Health****New fee rates announced under the Health Care Accountability Ordinance**

The Health Care Accountability Ordinance (HCAO) requires most city contractors to provide health benefits meeting minimum standards. Alternatively, employers can make a payment to the San Francisco General Hospital based on an hourly rate for each covered employee. These rates change every July 1. Here are the upcoming and current rates:

- As of July 1: \$7.50 per hour, capped at \$300 per week
- Through June 30: \$6.75 per hour, capped at \$275 per week

Resources

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[HealthCare Accountability Ordinance](#) (Government) and [GRIST](#), Sept. 3, 2024

US — Colorado (new)**Status**  **Claims occurring on or after Jan. 1, 2026.****Development****Career — Health****Paid family and medical leave law enacted**

The paid family medical leave law provides an additional 12 weeks of paid leave for claims occurring on or after Jan. 1, 2026, when a child is receiving in-patient neonatal intensive care unit (often called NICU) services. This is in addition to other forms of leave available for pregnancy-related reasons. The law also decreased the overall contribution rate from 0.90% (2025) to 0.88% (2026). The rate has a 1.2% ceiling.

Resources

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[SB25-144](#) (Legislation, May 30, 2025)

US — Colorado (new)

Status	 Effective Jan. 1, 2027.
Development	<p>Health</p> <p>Pharmacy benefit manager law enacted</p> <p>The Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM) law imposes fee restrictions on PBMs working on behalf of fully insured plans. Specifically, PBMs may charge a flat-dollar fee but cannot derive income from spread pricing, up-charging, manufacturer-derived revenues, prescription drug (Rx) mark-ups or copayments that exceed Rx cost. PBMs may still negotiate rebates and discounts with manufacturers. Pharmacy reimbursements must equal the national average drug acquisition cost (NADAC) plus a reasonable and adequate dispensing fee. The initial version of the bill included self-funded ERISA plans in its scope. The two laws do not affect self-funded ERISA plans. Colorado generally does not apply its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to fully insured plans issued in another state.</p>
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com</p> <p>HB25-1094 (Legislature)</p>

US — Colorado (new)

Status	 Effective Jan. 1, 2027.
Development	<p>Health</p> <p>Obesity and pre-diabetes treatment coverage mandated</p> <p>The Diabetes Prevention & Obesity Treatment Act requires fully insured plans in the large group market to cover obesity and pre-diabetes treatment, including the national diabetes prevention program, medical nutrition therapy, intensive behavioral or lifestyle therapy and metabolic and bariatric surgery. Insurers must offer policyholders the option to obtain Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved anti-obesity Rx, including at least one FDA-approved GLP-1. The two laws do not affect self-funded ERISA plans. Colorado generally does not apply its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to fully insured plans issued in another state.</p>
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com</p> <p>SB25-048 (Legislature, June 3, 2025)</p>

US — Colorado (new)

Status	 Effective Jan. 1, 2026.
Development	<p>Health</p> <p>Law eliminates the exception for individual and small-group market-plans regarding abortion coverage mandate</p> <p>Building on last fall’s voter-approved Amendment 79, the law removes an individual and small group market plan exception to a state mandate to cover abortions without cost sharing. Exceptions continue to exist for grandfathered plans and employers with sincerely held religious beliefs in conflict with the mandate. The law also authorizes state funding of abortion services. The law will take effect on Jan. 1, 2026.</p>
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com</p> <p>SB 25-183 (Legislature, April 24, 2025)</p>

US — Colorado (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Health</p> <p>Insurance coverage protections for Affordable Care Act-mandated preventive services enacted</p> <p>The law focuses on the pending <i>Braidwood v. Kennedy</i> case before the US Supreme Court, where the issue is the constitutionality of the US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), and consequently, the group health plan requirement to provide no-cost, in-network coverage of its A and B recommendations made on or after March 23, 2010). If the court strikes down the ACA provision, the state insurance commissioner can adopt USPSTF recommendations existing in January 2025 and/or recommendations by the Nurse-Physician Advisory Task Force for Colorado Health Care. The law took effect on May 12, 2025. California passed a similar law last year.</p>
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com</p> <p>SB 25-296 (Legislature, May 12, 2025)</p>

US — Indiana (new)**Status****Effective Jan 1, 2026.****Development****Health****Pharmacy benefit manager laws enacted**

Indiana enacted two laws focused on limiting pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) activities. One law includes prohibitions on preferences for affiliated pharmacies and network adequacy standards and is possibly applicable to self-funded ERISA plans. Another law requires fully insured plans to count certain drugs toward the ACA-mandated out-of-pocket maximum (OOPM), applicable to nongrandfathered plans.

SB 140. Insurers and PBMs must ensure pharmacy networks are reasonably adequate and accessible. Pharmacy reimbursements must equal at least the greater of the PBM's payment to an affiliated pharmacy, the actual acquisition cost plus a fair and reasonable dispensing fee, or the national average drug acquisition cost (known as NADAC) plus a dispensing fee tied to Medicaid. PBM networks must be open to any licensed pharmacy willing to agree to plan terms. Also, PBMs cannot:

- Impose quantity or refill limits on pharmacies that are more restrictive than affiliated pharmacies
- Limit network access to specialty drugs to affiliated pharmacies
- Charge less for using an affiliated pharmacy
- The above three prohibitions do not apply to mail-order pharmacies.

The application of these limitations to self-funded ERISA plans is not entirely clear. On the one hand, there is a specific exception only for self-funded ERISA plans sponsored by a hospital or health system, and the definitions of “health plan,” “insurer” and “PBM” are broadly worded. On the other hand, the law “applies to the extent that it is not in conflict with federal law.” Regardless, another provision states that third-party administrators working with self-funded plans with more than 100 lives cannot require the use of a specific PBM.

HB 1604. Insurers and PBMs must apply the OOPMs (\$10,150 self-only, \$20,300 family, in 2026) for covered drugs that meet both requirements:

- Life-saving or intended to manage chronic pain
- No generic equivalent

In addition, fully insured plans must apply third-party payments for drugs to the deductible and OOPM, with an exception for Health Savings Account-qualifying High Deductible Health Plans. Insurers and PBMs may not change plan terms based on the availability or amount of financial assistance available for a drug. Contrary to SB 140, the law contains a specific exemption for self-funded ERISA plans.

Indiana generally does not apply its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to fully insured plans issued in another state. For a discussion on extraterritoriality, see this USHN blogpost. The law does not affect self-funded ERISA plans.

Resources

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[SB 140](#) (Legislature, May 6, 2025) and [HB 1604](#) (Legislature, May 6, 2025)

US — Maryland (new)	
Status	 Effective Oct. 1, 2025.
Development	<p>Health</p> <p>Law provides standards for insurers and pharmacy benefit managers when using artificial intelligence</p> <p>The law requires insurers and pharmacy benefit managers working on behalf of fully insured plans to satisfy detailed standards when using AI in utilization reviews. These standards include making determinations based on individual medical history (and not based solely on a group dataset), continuing to include healthcare providers in the determination and ensuring no unfair discrimination.</p>
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com</p> <p>HB 820 (Legislature, May 20, 2025)</p>
US — Maryland (new)	
Status	 Effective for plan years starting in 2026.
Development	<p>Health</p> <p>Law requires fully insured plans to apply third-party financial assistance to cost sharing</p> <p>The law requires fully insured plans to apply third-party financial assistance to cost sharing, including the deductible and out-of-pocket maximum. Exceptions exist for some AB-rated generic equivalents and interchangeable biological products as well as the Health Savings Account-qualifying high-deductible health plans.</p>
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com</p> <p>HB 1246/SB 773 (Legislature, May 20, 2025)</p>
US — Maryland (new)	
Status	 Effective Jan. 1, 2026.
Development	<p>Health</p> <p>Fully-insured plans may not exclude certain speciality oncology drugs</p> <p>The law prohibits fully insured plans from excluding certain specialty drugs administered or dispensed by an in-network provider that is an in-network oncology provider. The drug must meet specified criteria. In these cases, the plan's reimbursement rate cannot exceed the applicable specialty pharmacy rate.</p>
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com</p> <p>HB 1243/SB 975 (Legislature, May 20, 2025)</p>

US — Montana (new)

Status	 Effective Oct. 1, 2026.
Development	<p>Health Insurance law mandates gender detransition coverage</p> <p>Montana enacted a law that requires fully insured plans, the state governmental plan, and the state’s Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Programs with a gender transition benefit to also cover gender detransition treatment with equivalent cost sharing.</p> <p>HB 682 requires this coverage even if the plan later drops gender transition benefits. The law also establishes a statute of limitations for minors who bring tort actions for injuries suffered as a result of treatment.</p> <p>The law will take effect on Oct. 1, 2026. Montana generally does not apply its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to fully insured plans issued in another state. The law does not affect self-funded ERISA plans.</p>
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com HB 682 (Legislature, May 13, 2025)</p>

US — Nebraska (new)

Status	 Effective Jan. 1, 2026.
Development	<p>Health Pharmacy benefit manager law to change</p> <p>LB 198 prohibits these actions by pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) working on behalf of fully insured plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying stricter terms and conditions to an unaffiliated specialty pharmacy than those for any affiliated specialty pharmacy • Mandatory mail-order programs • Required use of an affiliated pharmacy • Participant auto-enrollment in a mail-order program, except for maintenance drugs • Stopping or limiting participant use of any in-network pharmacy • Transferring a prescription to another pharmacy without participant consent • Penalizing a pharmacy for refusing to fill a prescription below its acquisition cost • Including spread pricing in a contract <p>The law will take effect on Jan. 1, 2026, except contract extensions may still include spread pricing for contracts executed before Jan. 1, 2026. However, this exception will expire on Jan. 1, 2029. Nebraska generally does not apply its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to state residents covered by fully insured plans issued in another state. The law does not affect self-funded ERISA plans.</p>
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com LB 198 (Legislature, May 21, 2025)</p>

US — New Hampshire (new)

Status	 Effective July 13, 2025
Development	<p>Career — Health</p> <p>Changes to paid family leave laws enacted</p> <p>As a result of 2025 Ch. 37 (HB 517), the state will no longer engage in outreach and marketing to private employers about the opt-in opportunity under the Granite State Paid Family Leave Plan applicable to state governmental employers.</p>
Resources	2025 Ch. 37 (HB 517) (Legislature, April 17, 2025)

US — New Hampshire (new)

Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Health</p> <p>Court decision upholds state insurance law extraterritoriality</p> <p>The state insurance department can enforce its fertility coverage law against BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee (BCBST), even though the insurer was not licensed in New Hampshire. BCBST used the BlueCard Program network for New Hampshire residents. It denied coverage, arguing that Tennessee insurance law does not have such a mandate. In the subsequent litigation, BCBST’s argument was that ERISA preempted New Hampshire law because the insurer was a fiduciary. The 6thCircuit Court of Appeals affirmed a lower court judgment in favor of New Hampshire. The court concluded that ERISA does not preempt insurance laws.</p>
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com</p> <p>Ruling (First Circuit Court of Appeals, May 8, 2025)</p>

US — New Jersey (previously covered, now effective)

Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career — Health — Wealth</p> <p>Law enacted that requires promotion opportunity disclosures, pay transparency in job postings</p> <p>On Nov. 18, 2024, New Jersey’s governor signed legislation (S2310/A4151) that will require employers with 10 or more employees to disclose promotion opportunities to employees and salary range and benefit disclosures in job postings. The law, which will be enforced by the Division of Labor and Workforce Development, took effect in June 2025. As a reminder, New Jersey already prohibits private employers from inquiring about a job applicant’s salary history, benefits and other compensation during the hiring process.</p>
Resources	<p>tauseef.rahman@mercer.com</p> <p>GRIST, Nov. 2, 2024</p>

US — New York (new)

Status  **Effective dates vary.**

Development **Career**
Budget includes employment measures
 New York’s FY 2026 budget, which was recently signed into law by the Governor, includes employment measures. Highlights include:

- Clarifying frequency of pay for manual workers. Manual workers are not immediately entitled to liquidated damages if they were paid regularly on at least a semi-monthly basis. Once an employer is put on notice that the class of workers are manual, they owe interest for the weeks in which the workers were paid semi-monthly rather than weekly. If the employer does not pay those manual workers weekly going forward then they may be subject to liquidated damages.
- Allowing striking workers to collect unemployment insurance benefits after a two-week waiting period, down from three weeks.
- Overhauling minor employment certification and recordkeeping requirements (effective May 9, 2027).
- Expanding Department of Labor enforcement power following an unpaid wage theft payment to include the authority to levy liens, seize financial assets, and issue a stop work order following an unpaid wage theft judgement.
- Increasing civil penalties for child labor law violations.

Resources [Governor Hochul signs landmark legislation to strengthen and protect our workforce as part of the FY 2026 budget \(Governor’s office, May 9, 2025\)](#)

US — Ohio (new)

Status  **Effective July 21, 2025**

Development **Career**
Labor law notices can be provided online
 Ohio’s governor recently signed legislation (SB 33) that will allow employers to provide state labor law required notices to employees on the internet instead of being posted in conspicuous places in the workplace. If provided online, employers must ensure that they are accessible to their employees.

Resources [SB 33](#) (Legislature)

US — Ohio — Cleveland (new)	
Status	 Effective Oct. 25, 2025
Development	<p>Career Salary history ban, pay transparency law enacted</p> <p>Cleveland’s City Council, on April 28, 2025, passed a new pay transparency ordinance (Ord. No. 104-2025) that goes into effect on Oct. 25, 2025 (180 days after passing) and applies to businesses with 15 or more employees. Under the new law:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers are prohibited from asking job applicants about their current or previous salaries during the hiring process. • All formal job postings must include salary ranges or pay scales. <p>The Fair Wage Employment Board will oversee enforcement. Employers who violate the new pay transparency laws could face fines of up to \$5,000 per offense.</p>
Resources	Ordinance No. 104-2025 (Cleveland City Council, April 28, 2025) and Cleveland City Council passes groundbreaking pay transparency law (Cleveland City Council, April 28, 2025)
US — Oklahoma (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Health Pharmacy benefit manager law changed</p> <p>SB 993 makes certain changes to existing law on pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) audits of pharmacies, including an annual limit of 50 claims per prescription number. PBMs include those working on behalf of both fully insured and self-funded ERISA plans. Significantly, the new law requires plan sponsors to receive a copy of final audit results within 30 calendar days of final disposition or upon a plan sponsor’s request. The law also includes other changes to appeals and time frames. Oklahoma generally applies its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to state residents covered by fully insured plans issued in another state. The law became effective on May 22, 2025.</p>
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com SB 933 (legislature)
US — Oklahoma (new)	
Status	 Effective July 1, 2025
Development	<p>Health State-facilitated public exchange established</p> <p>HB 1512 authorizes the Oklahoma Insurance Commissioner to seek HHS approval of a state-run ACA exchange, joining 19 states and Washington, DC. The law creates a state-based exchange revolving fund. The law will take effect on July 1, 2025. It is unclear when the exchange will become operational.</p>
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com HB 1512 (Legislature, May 15, 2025)

US — Oklahoma (new)

Status	 Effective July 1, 2025
Development	<p>Health ACA exchange to move forward HB 1512 authorizes the Oklahoma Insurance Commissioner to seek HHS approval of a state-run ACA exchange, joining 19 states and Washington, DC. The law creates a state-based exchange revolving fund. The law will take effect on July 1, 2025. It is unclear when the exchange will become operational.</p>
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com HB 1512 (Legislature, May 15, 2025)</p>

US — Oklahoma (new)

Status	 Effective Nov. 1, 2025
Development	<p>Health Laws enacted that impose limits on administration of prescription drug (Rx) benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HB 1808. The Ensuring Transparency in Prescription Drugs Prior Authorization Act imposes disclosure and review requirements on fully insured plans and pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) performing Rx prior authorization. Specifically, utilization review entities must post their requirements, including clinical criteria, as well as drug formularies on an accessible website. Only a plan’s physician, pharmacist or licensed mental health professional may make adverse benefit determinations. The law shortens prior authorization time frames. State actuaries estimated the law’s cost to be \$3 million alone for the state governmental plan in FY2026. A penalty of up to \$5,000 applies. The law’s scope appears to be limited to fully insured plans. • HB 789. The law bans effective rate contracting, where PBM reimbursement is based on the effective rate of payment rather than a predetermined fixed price or fixed discount percentage. Earlier versions required PBM reimbursement of at least 106% of the National Average Drug Acquisition Cost (known as NADAC), plus a \$15 professional fee per Rx fill. PBMs that lease, rent or otherwise make provider networks available to another PBM cannot combine any ERISA or government plans with any non-ERISA or nongovernment plans. The law’s scope appears to include self-funded ERISA plans. <p>Oklahoma generally applies its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to state residents covered by fully insured plans issued in another state.</p>
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com HB 1808 (Legislature, May 29, 2025) and HB 789 (Legislature, May 28, 2025)</p>

US — Oregon (new)

Status	 Effective Sept. 24, 2025
Development	<p>Career — Health Laws amend paid family medical leave Two laws have been enacted that make relatively minor changes to its paid family and medical leave (PFML) law.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SB 69. Leave to care for a child is available only if the child is under age 18 or has a substantially limiting physical or mental impairment. Closure of a school or child care provider due to a public health emergency is an additional exception to employees' 30-day advance notice requirement, unless the announcement occurs at least 30 days before leave starts. • SB 858. An individual is ineligible for PFML benefits in any week in which he or she is receiving unemployment benefits.
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com SB 69 (Legislature) and SB 858 (Legislature)</p>

US — Oregon (new)

Status	 Effective Jan. 1, 2026
Development	<p>Career — Health Paid sick and safe leave allowed for voluntary blood donation SB 1108 allows PSSL for voluntary blood donation, if approved or accredited by the American Association of Blood Banks or the American Red Cross.</p>
Resources	SB 1108 (Legislature)

US — Puerto Rico

Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career — Health Benefit and leave laws vary Puerto Rico is an unincorporated territory within the US with a separate tax code and constitution and its own tax, benefit and insurance laws. Nonetheless, many (but not all) US laws apply to this territory of a little more than three million residents. The GRIST cited below summarizes major requirements and special issues, including an overview of complicated tax-related health and fringe benefit rules, leave laws, the ACA and more.</p>
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com GRIST, Aug. 12, 2024</p>

US — Texas (new)

Status	 Effective for plan years starting on or after Jan. 1, 2026.
Development	<p>Career — Health Coverage required for adverse effects of gender transition</p> <p>SB 1257 applies to fully insured plans, fully insured and self-funded multiple employer welfare arrangements (i.e., MEWAs), self-funded professional employer organizations (i.e., PEOs) and Medicaid that cover gender transition procedures and treatment to cover these additional services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All adverse consequences, including short- and long-term side effects • Necessary baseline and follow-up testing or screening, at least annually • Any procedures, treatments or therapy needed to manage, reverse, reconstruct from or recover from gender transition. <p>This additional coverage must be available even if the participant was not enrolled in the plan for the original procedure or treatment. The law will be effective for plans starting in 2026. Montana recently enacted a similar law. Texas generally applies its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to state residents covered by fully insured plans issued in another state. Other than MEWAs and PEOs, the law does not affect self-funded ERISA plans.</p>
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com SB 1257 (Legislature, May 4, 2025)</p>

US — Vermont (new)

Status	 Effective July 1, 2025
Development	<p>Career — Health Changes to parental and family leave law enacted</p> <p>Changes to the Parental and Family Leave Act were enacted (2025 Act 32 (HB 461)). Here is a summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expands family member definition to include domestic partners/civil union partners (and their parents), individuals to whom the employee is or was standing in loco parentis, grandparents, grandchildren and siblings, among others • Adds these permitted uses: recovery from childbirth or miscarriage, safe leave (domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking), and military qualifying exigences • Allows up to two weeks of bereavement leave with no more than five workdays taken consecutively. <p>Under existing law, leave is typically unpaid, but employees can substitute accrued sick leave, vacation or other accrued paid leave, up to six weeks. The law will take effect on July 1, 2025. Vermont does not have a paid family and medical leave mandate. Instead, a program for state governmental employees permits employers to opt in.</p>
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com 2025 Act 32 (HB 461) (Legislature, May 22, 2025)</p>

US — Washington (new)**Status****Effective July 27, 2025****Development****Career — Health****Penalties for pay transparency violations clarified, corrections allowed**

On May 20, 2025, Washington's governor signed legislation (SB 5408) that clarifies the amount of penalties that can be imposed on employers for pay transparency violations and allows for corrections. The pay transparency law, which became effective on Jan. 1, 2023, requires employers with 15 or more employees to disclose in each job posting the wage scale or salary range, and a general description of all the benefits and other compensation to be offered. Highlights of SB 5408, which becomes effective on July 27, 2025, include:

- The penalty for noncompliance is clarified to be between \$100 and \$5,000 per violation. The Department of Labor and Industries should consider the size of the employer, whether the claim applies to a willful or repeat violation, and the amount of damages needed to deter future violations. Previously, the penalty allowed job applicants to seek \$5,000 in damages per violation, which resulted in class action lawsuits.
- A new grace period provision provides that employers must receive a five business day notice during which they can correct a violation without penalty. Employers must also contact third-party posting entities to correct the posting. This grace period provision is set to expire in July 2027.
- Employers cannot be held liable for copies of their job ads posted to third-party websites without their permission.
- If employers are advertising for fixed wage positions, they can disclose the fixed wage amount, rather than a scale or range.

Resources

[SB 5408](#) (Legislature, May 20, 2025) and [GRIST](#), Dec. 19, 2022

US — Washington (new)

Status



Effective Jan. 1, 2026

Development

Career — Health

Paid family medical leave grant program, job protections expanded

A Washington law extends small business grant assistance to employers with fewer than 50 employees working in the state under its paid family and medical leave (PFML) program. Similarly, the scope of job protections increased in terms of employer applicability and employee eligibility.

Washington's law exempts employers with fewer than 50 employees in the state from the PFML program. It offers employers in the 50-150 range a \$3,000 grant for hiring a temporary replacement worker for at least seven days or a \$1,000 grant if the employer incurs significant additional wage-related costs due to the leave. An annual 10-grant limit applies.

Under 2025 Pub. Law 304 (HB 1213), these grants are available to under-50 employers that voluntarily provide PFML, except that \$3,000 is available for both reasons.

The law also modified job protections. Previously, an employee had to work at least 12 months with at least 1,250 hours of service with the same employer, which had to employ at least 50 Washington employees. Now, employees need only work at least 180 calendar days for the same employer before taking leave to be eligible for job-protected leave. Job protections will now apply to smaller employers, according to this schedule:

- 25 or more employees, starting Jan. 1, 2026
- 15 or more employees, starting Jan. 1, 2027
- Eight or more employees, starting Jan. 1, 2028

Employers must now also maintain health coverage for any PFML period. The minimum duration for a PFML claim decreased from eight to four consecutive hours.

Resources

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[2025 Pub. Law 304](#) (HB 1213) (Legislature, May 17, 2025)

US — Washington (new)

Status  **Effective July 27, 2025**

Development **Career**
Personnel file disclosure requirements strengthened
 Washington employers face timeframe for personnel disclosure requirements and penalties for noncompliance under legislation (HB 1308) that becomes effective July 27, 2025. Highlights include:

- Employers will be required to provide personnel files to employees, former employees or their designees at no cost within 21 calendar days of receiving a request.
- Personnel files include all job application records, performance evaluations, disciplinary records, leave and accommodations requests, payroll records, and employment agreements.
- Upon request from a former employee or their designee, employers must provide a signed written statement within 21 days that includes the effective date of discharge, whether the employer had a reason for the discharge, and if so, the reasons.
- Former employee is someone who separated from employment within three years of the request.
- Employers that fail to comply with may be sued by employees and subject to penalties ranging from \$250 to \$1,000.
- Washington law already requires employers to provide personnel files to employees upon request.

Resources [HB 1308](#) (Legislature, May 13, 2025)

US — Washington (new)

Status  **Effective July 27, 2025**

Development **Career — Health**
Law requiring employee notice before certain layoffs and closures
 Washington’s governor has signed SB 5525, which will generally require employers with 50 or more employees to provide written notice to the Employment Security Department, affected employees and unions before certain mass layoffs and business closures. Some exceptions do apply (such as, faltering company, unforeseeable business circumstances or natural disaster). Also, an employer may not include any employee on state paid family or medical leave in a mass layoff. The legislation includes penalties for noncompliance and is effective July 27, 2025. A detailed summary of the legislation can be found in the Final Bill Report.

Resources [SB 5525](#) (Legislature, May 13, 2025)

US — Washington (new)	
Status	 Effective Jan. 1, 2026
Development	<p>Career — Health</p> <p>Hate crimes added as a permitted use of paid or unpaid domestic violence leave</p> <p>The law (SB 5101) adds hate crimes as a permitted use of paid or unpaid domestic violence leave. Any permitted use of domestic violence leave also qualifies as a permitted use under the state’s paid sick and safe leave (PSSL) mandate. The criminal statute broadly defines hate crimes are broadly defined under to include harmful acts based on a person’s race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, or mental, physical or sensory disability.</p>
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com</p> <p>SB 5101 (Legislature, May 20, 2025)</p>
US — Washington (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Health</p> <p>Changes made to the long-term care coverage mandate</p> <p>The law (SB 5291) makes changes to the state’s long-term care (LTC) coverage mandate, requiring residents to contribute to the state program through a 0.58% payroll deduction (in effect since July 2023), unless they have an exemption.</p> <p>Employees who received an exemption may now rescind the exemption before July 1, 2028. A new voluntary exemption is available for active-duty service members concurrently engaged in off-duty civilian employment. An automatic exemption exists for employees holding a nonimmigrant visa for temporary work. The law also removes the condition that there must have been no interruption in service of five or more consecutive years to qualify for benefits if a participant has paid the premium for at least 10 years. Finally, the law establishes a private market supplemental LTC insurance option upon exhaustion of program benefits.</p>
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com</p> <p>SB 5291 (Legislature, May 20, 2025)</p>
US — Washington (new)	
Status	 Effective July 1, 2025
Development	<p>Health</p> <p>Covered-lives assessment rates for fiscal year 2026 issued</p> <p>The Washington Partnership Access Line (WAPAL) Fund Advisory Committee determined the covered-lives assessment (CLA) rates for fiscal year 2026. The state has a CLA and reporting obligation for health plan insurers and sponsors with covered state residents. The rate changes every July 1. The new monthly rate (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026) was approved at a meeting on May 22, 2025, increasing from \$0.06 to \$0.07 per covered life.</p>
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com</p> <p>Frequently Asked Questions (WAPAL) and Meeting Agenda (WAPAL Fund, May 22, 2025)</p>

US (previously covered, with upcoming effective dates)

Development

Career

- [Salary disclosures, wage data reporting to be required in Massachusetts](#) — key date: July 31, 2025
- [Salary disclosures to be required in job advertisements in Vermont](#) — key date: July 31, 2025
- [Hourly minimum wage to increase to \\$18 in Hawaii](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Artificial Intelligence law focused on employment laws enacted in Illinois](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Artificial intelligence law enacted; will significantly affect employers in Colorado](#) — key date: Feb. 1, 2026

Career — Health

- [Paid family medical leave effective dates delayed in Maryland](#) — key date: July 1, 2025, but could be delayed further
- [Pharmacy benefit manager regulations finalized in New York](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [Paid sick and safe leave permitted use added in Washington](#) — key date: July 27, 2025
- [Paid sick leave initiative approved in Nebraska](#) — key date: Oct. 1, 2025
- [Paid family and medical leave mandated in Minnesota](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Paid family medical leave rates adjusted in Minnesota](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026

Health

- [Network adequacy rules for fully insured plans issued](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [Insulin cost-sharing law enacted in Illinois](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [Fiduciary duty on pharmacy benefit managers and third-party administrators in Indiana](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [Pharmacy benefit manager \(PBM\), prescription law enacted in Massachusetts](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [Data protection law enacted in Tennessee](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [Fertility law expanded in Arkansas](#) — key date: July 14, 2025
- [Cost sharing for insulin and related supplies capped in North Dakota](#) — key date: Aug. 1, 2025
- [Reporting requirements for pharmacy benefit managers in Arkansas](#) — key date: Aug. 3, 2025
- [Coverage required for severe obesity in Arkansas](#) — key date: Aug. 3, 2025
- [Montana joins telehealth compact](#) — key date: Oct. 1, 2025
- [Breastfeeding consultation services coverage required in Arkansas](#) — key date: Plan years starting in 2026
- [Portable benefit plan for independent contractors created in Alabama](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Doula coverage mandated in Delaware](#) — key date: Plan years beginning in 2026
- [2026 individual-mandate coverage dollar limits set in Massachusetts](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Dependent coverage law enacted in Illinois](#) — key date: plan years starting in 2026

US (previously covered with upcoming effective dates)

Development

- [Law applies balance billing restrictions to ground ambulance providers in Texas](#) — key date: expires Sept. 1, 2025
- [Telehealth law to expire in Hawaii](#) — key date: Dec. 31, 2025
- [Mental health parity changes](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Prescription law enacted in Arizona](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Telehealth law enacted in Colorado](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [New law focuses on prior authorization practices for fully insured plans in Colorado](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Abortion coverage required in Delaware](#) — key date: Plan years starting on or after Jan. 1, 2026
- [Colonoscopy coverage mandate enacted in Illinois](#) — key date: Plan years starting in 2026
- [Fertility-related insurance laws enacted in Illinois](#) — key date: Plan years starting in 2026
- [Pregnancy-related services coverage mandate enacted in Illinois](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [2026 individual-mandate coverage dollar limits set in Massachusetts](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Paid family and medical leave law enacted in Minnesota](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Pharmacy benefit manager law enacted in Pennsylvania](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Telehealth laws enacted in Washington](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Pharmacy benefit manager law enacted in Washington](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Telehealth parity extended in New Jersey](#) — key date: July 1, 2026
- [Prior authorization insurance law enacted in Wyoming](#) — key date: July 1, 2026
- [State-based exchange delivery to change in Oregon](#) — key date: Nov. 1, 2026

Wealth

- [PBGC premium acceleration set to take effect for 2025](#) — key date: Sept. 15, 2025
- [Effective date for portion of upcoming required minimum distribution regulations delayed](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Tax withholding rule for pension payments outside of the US finalized](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [IRS delays SECURE 2.0's Roth catch-up mandate](#) — key date: 2026

Section 4

Asia Pacific

Australia (new)

Status



Currently effective

Development

Wealth

Australian Financial Complaints Authority publishes approaches to three key superannuation topics

On May 16, 2025, the Australian Financial Complaints Authority (AFCA) published updated Approaches to three key superannuation topics in response to stakeholder feedback. Highlights of the updates include:

- Delayed insurance claims in superannuation. Explaining how AFCA considers whether the trustee's or insurer's decision was fair and reasonable and providing additional information on the consequences of unreasonable delays. AFCA has also added insight into when superannuation trustees should bring certain claims to the insurer's attention.
- Sections 29(6) and 29(7) of the Insurance Contracts Act 1984 (relating to retrospective contract variations by an insurer where there has been a misrepresentation or non-disclosure by the insured). Providing clarity on the expectations placed upon trustees versus insurers and an expanded explanation of the nature of trustees' responsibilities under section 52(7)(d) of the Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act 1993.
- Superannuation death benefit complaints. New guidance for trustees in matters involving family violence and clarifying the assessment of financial dependency, noting that the primary purpose of a death benefit is to provide for dependents who would have financially relied upon the member at the time of death.

Resources

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[Updated AFCA approaches support fairer Superannuation outcomes](#) (AFCA, May 16, 2025)

Australia (new)**Status**  **Consultation is open until June 27, 2025.****Development****Wealth****Second consultation on anti-money laundering/counter-terrorism financing reforms released**

The Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (Austrac) has released its second consultation on draft new anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing (AML/CTF) rules that are due to take effect on March 31, 2026. The consultation closes on June 27, 2025, after which AUSTRAC plans to finalise the rules for publication in August 2025. The rules will support the reforms in the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing (AML/CTF) Amendment Act 2024, including new requirements for AML/CTF programs and customer due diligence. The second exposure draft considers feedback received on the first consultation and includes new requirements on reportable details for threshold transaction reports and suspicious matter reports, and information that is required for enrolment and registration applications. The consultation also includes a separate exposure draft with amendments to current rules-based exemptions that would be retained and an exposure draft explanatory statement.

Resourcespaul.shallue@mercer.com[Second public consultation on new AML/CTF rules](#) (AUSTRAC, May 19, 2025)**Australia (new)****Development****Career — Health — Wealth**

- [Superannuation contributions on paid parental leave legislation enacted](#) — key date: July 1, 2025

Wealth

- [Australian Tax Office confirms Transfer Balance Cap increase](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [Changes to Operational Risk Financial Requirement finalized](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [Updated guidance on strategic planning and member outcomes issued](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [New operational risk management standard to apply](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [Operational resilience guidance finalized](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [APRA Super Data Transformation, Phase 2 enhancements finalized](#) — key date: December 2025
- [Extension of superannuation disclosure relief confirmed](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Anti-money laundering, counter-terrorism legislation effective](#) — key date: March 31, 2026
- [Superannuation, Medicare implications of 2025/26 federal budget highlights](#) — key date: July 1, 2026

Cambodia (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career New labour regulations on working time now effective</p> <p>New guidelines regarding overtime work, work on paid holidays and the suspension of weekly days-off applicable to all organizations that are subject to Cambodian law took effect on May 6, 2025. The measures are included in Prakas No. 112/25, and highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overtime work can be requested, subject to the organization's operational needs, but it must be voluntary and compensated at 150% of the regular wage for daytime work and 200% for night work (from 10 pm until 5 am). • Work voluntarily performed by employees during their paid holidays must be compensated at the same rate as their normal daily wage. • The suspension of the weekly day-off is permitted in cases of urgent work and must be compensated at twice the normal daily wage. Certain establishments can also reduce employees' weekly days-off by up to two days per month where workdays have been lost because of adverse weather. • Employers must apply for approval by the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training at least three days prior to implementing overtime work, work on paid holidays and suspending weekly days-off. • Fines and other legal penalties apply to noncompliance with the regulations.
Resources	Prakas No. 112/25 (Khmer) (Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training)
China (new)	
Status	 Extended until Dec. 31, 2025
Development	<p>Career Unemployment insurance contribution refund policy extended</p> <p>China's unemployment insurance contribution refund policy has been extended again to Dec. 31, 2025, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, Ministry of Finance, and State Administration of Taxation have announced. Highlights of the policy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers can use the refunds for various purposes, such as cost reduction, the payment of social insurance contributions and to fund training programs. • The maximum refund is capped at 30% of unemployment insurance contributions for large enterprises, and 60% for small- and medium-sized employers. It is calculated on the contributions paid by the employer and employees. <p>The employer must have paid contributions in full for more than 12 months and must not have laid-off employees in the previous year, or the organization's lay-off rate must not be higher than the national urban survey unemployment rate control target during the previous year.</p>
Resources	Announcement (Chinese) (Government, April 14, 2025)

China — Shanghai (new)**Status**  **Currently effective****Development****Career****Employers offered subsidy for hiring unemployed university graduates**

Shanghai has announced a subsidy program for employers that hire unemployed graduates and other young jobseekers between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2025. Employers will be paid a subsidy of 1,500 CNY if they hire a graduate who has been unemployed during the two-year period following their graduation, or individuals aged between 16 to 24 years who are registered unemployed. To be eligible, employers must sign an employment contract, and pay full social security contributions (unemployment, workplace injury and employee pension) on the employee's behalf for a minimum three-month period.

Resources

[No application required: Shanghai offers \\$200 subsidy for each youth hire](#) (Government, May 13, 2025)

China (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)**Development****Career**

- [Preferential taxation policy for expatriates expanded](#) — key date: Dec. 31, 2027
- [Preferential taxation policy for annual one-time bonus extended](#) — key date: Dec. 31, 2027

China — Beijing**Status**  **Currently effective****Development****Wealth****Revised basic pension contribution amounts announced**

Beijing's Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security has announced the updated statutory basic pension insurance contribution base for 2025. These revised minimum and maximum annual amounts are 1,000 CNY and 9,000 CNY, respectively. Contribution rates vary by city and are calculated as a percentage of the employee's monthly salary. Each city may set a minimum and maximum contribution base, generally based on the local average salary.

Resources

[Announcement](#) (Chinese) (Beijing Municipal Human Resources and Social Security Bureau, March 28, 2025)

Hong Kong (new)**Status**  **Currently effective****Development****Career****Minimum wage increased**

The minimum wage increased to HK\$42.10/hour, up from HK\$40, effective May 1, 2025. In April 2024, the Chief Executive in Council agreed to the Minimum Wage Committee's recommendation to review the minimum wage annually.

Resources

[Min wage recommendation adopted](#) (Government, Feb. 18, 2025)

Hong Kong (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Career</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate governance code and listing rules revised, diversity enhanced — key date: July 1, 2025 • Number of statutory holidays increased — key date: 2026
India (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Career — Health — Wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor and employment laws reformed — key date: effective date delayed
Indonesia (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Career</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of public housing savings program, contributions and registration issued — key date: May 20, 2027
Singapore (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Career</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work permit schemes to be revised — key date: Sept. 1, 2025 • First workplace fairness bill passes parliament — key date: 2026 or 2027 <p>Career — Wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retirement and reemployment ages to increase — key date: July 1, 2026 <p>Wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Provident Fund contribution rates for older workers to increase — key date: Beginning in 2026
South Korea (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Career</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanctions against employers habitually in wage arrears introduced — key date: Oct. 23, 2025 <p>Wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans to increase pension premiums, expand coverage — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
Taiwan (new)	
Status	<p> Currently effective</p>
Development	<p>Career — Health</p> <p>Four new public holidays added</p> <p>Taiwan's president promulgated legislation on May 28, 2025, that adds four new national holidays, and extends Labor day (May 1), a national holiday, to all sectors' employees. The four new holidays are: Confucius' birthday (September 28); the anniversary of the Battle of Gunningtou (October 25); Constitution Day (December 25) and Little New Year — the day before Lunar New Year's Eve. The legislation became effective on the day of promulgation, which means there are three additional holidays in the second half of 2025.</p>
Resources	<p>ashley.yau@mercer.com Promulgation (Chinese) (Office of the President, May 28, 2025) and Legislation (Chinese) (Government, May 28, 2025)</p>

Taiwan (new)	
Status	 Effective October 1, 2025
Development	<p>Career Program that aims to boost work-family balance and female employment expanded The Ministry of Labor has announced the expansion of certain programs that aim to boost work-family balance and female employment. Beginning Oct. 1, 2025, enterprises with established childcare facilities services will be subsidized up to TWD \$500,000 per year. Enterprises that provide in-home childcare services, or that send their employees' children to childcare service organizations, will be subsidized up to TWD \$600,000 per year. This measure expands the program introduced in 2015 that subsidizes employers who build new childcare facilities. Employers are also urged to introduce workplace measures to protect the physical and mental health of their female employees. Measures include conducting hazard assessment, control, and classification management for jobs that pose a risk of maternal health — particularly for female workers during pregnancy and for up to one year following a birth. Additionally, the Ministry of Labor has included maternal health protection as part of its inspection procedures.</p>
Resources	<p>gigi.li@mercer.com Announcement (Taiwanese) (Ministry of Labor, May 11, 2025)</p>
Taiwan (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Career — Wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees and employers can negotiate post-retirement age employment — key date: unknown
Thailand (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details about Employee Welfare Fund provided, contributions required — key date: Oct. 1, 2025
Vietnam (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Career — Wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social insurance law revised — key date: Effective July 1, 2025

Section 5

Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA)

European Union (previously covered, with upcoming effective dates)

Development

Career

- [Law approved to improve gender balance on company boards](#) — key date: June 30, 2026
- [Corporate sustainability, human rights due diligence directive finalized](#) — key date: July 26, 2026
- [Ban on forced or child labor finalized](#) — key date: Dec. 14, 2027

Career — Health

- [Platform Worker’s Directive moves forward](#) — key date: Dec. 2, 2026

Career — Health — Wealth

- [Agreement on postponement of corporate sustainability, due diligence reporting rules for some companies](#) — key date: Dec. 31, 2025
- [Pay transparency law must be transposed into national law](#) — key date: June 7, 2026

Belgium (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development

Wealth

- [Blue- and white-collar pension harmonization postponed](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2027
- [Federal government agrees on pension reforms](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2028

Bulgaria (previously covered, now effective)

Status



Currently effective

Development

Career

Electronic employment register introduced

From June 1, 2025, the employment history of employees must be recorded electronically in the Unified Electronic Employment Record that forms part of the national electronic employment register managed by Bulgaria’s National Revenue Agency (NRA). The use of paper format labor books is no longer permitted. The electronic format must include all information on employees’ employment contracts currently recorded (including conclusion, amendment and termination of employment contracts), in addition to the amount of permitted annual leave, the number of leave days taken in the year of the employee’s termination and certain types of compensation (such as termination due to illness). Employees have online access to their electronic employment record, and employers are able to view information submitted by an employee’s previous employers (excluding their salary). The NRA is also able to access the electronic employment records, and can provide access to the Labour Inspectorate and other authorities.

Resources

[Unified Electronic Employment Record](#) (Bulgarian) (Government, Oct. 10, 2023)

Egypt (new)**Status****Effective Sept. 1, 2025****Development****Career — Health****Employment law to change**

Changes to Egypt's employment law will take effect on Sept. 1, 2025. Law No. 14 of 2025, which will replace Labor Law No. 12 of 2003, includes measures that aim to modernize employment relations and boost worker protection. Ministerial decrees will be issued within 90 days of the effective date to provide further details. Highlights include:

- Employment contracts must be in Arabic and issued in four copies (for the employer, employee, social insurance authority and the Labor Office). Contracts will be presumed to be indefinite, unless otherwise justified.
- Different types of employment are also recognized for the first time, such as remote working, part-time employment and gig economy/platform work roles.
- A minimum three-month notice period must be given to terminate indefinite-term workers (where there is no misconduct), and severance will be calculated on two months of wages per year of service. An end-of-service compensation of one month per year of service will also be introduced for workers on certain fixed-term contracts.
- Employees will be entitled to maternity leave from the first day of employment — currently, employees must have at least 10 months of service. Maternity leave will increase to 120 days, up from 90 days, and will be capped at three leave periods during the employee's employment (currently, maternity leave is capped at two times).
- Women could also reduce their working hours by one hour per day starting from the sixth month of pregnancy, and they will be exempt from performing overtime for up to six months following their baby's birth.
- Women will be entitled to up to two years of unpaid child care leave in larger enterprises.
- The employers' contribution to the training and rehabilitation fund will be reduced to 0.25% of the minimum social insurance wage, down from 1% of the enterprise's profits, and will be capped at EGP £30 per employee. Only employees with 30 or more employees (up from 10) will have to pay the contribution, and employers that already offer internal training programs will be exempt.
- A specialized labor court will deal with employment disputes.
- A National Wages Council will be established to propose changes to the national minimum wage. Private sector employees' wages will increase by 3% per year, calculated on their insurable wage; employers that face financial hardship could petition the National Wages Council for a reduction or exemption.
- Guidelines on occupational safety and health inspections will be available
- Provisions that criminalize sexual harassment and workplace bullying
- Anti-harassment measures

Resources

[Law No. 14 of 2025](#) (Arabic) (Government)

France (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Health</p> <p>Advanced practice nurses may now prescribe sick leave for up to three days</p> <p>Advanced practice nurses in France may now prescribe sick leave for up to three days under the Order of April 25, 2025, issued by the Ministry of Health. This order amends the Order of July 18, 2018, to add to the list of prescriptions of health products or services subject to compulsory medical prescription that advance nurses are also authorized to prescribe.</p>
Resources	<p>amandine.marsella@mercer.com</p> <p>Order of April 25, 2025 (French) (Official Bulletin)</p>
France (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Career</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New gender quotas imposed for senior execs/management teams — key date: March 1, 2026
Germany (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Career</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum wage increase for cleaners — key date: 2026
Hungary (new)	
Status	 Proposal
Development	<p>Health — Wealth</p> <p>Electronic administration of social security records planned</p> <p>Legislation is being considered in Parliament that would abolish paper-based social security records and establish an electronic system to review insurance status, health insurance cash benefits and data on accident sickness benefits via an electronic interface.</p> <p>According to the proposal, the changes would come into force on Jan. 1, 2026. The explanatory memorandum states that the paper-based record book did not include, for example, the status of self-employed or partner, sickness benefits, accident benefits or the payment of social security, child care and adoption allowance, which will be available in the electronic record book.</p> <p>To ensure compliance with the mandatory rest periods and working time rules for healthcare workers, the changes provide that employers would be able to electronically request information on the other healthcare providers that employees or potential employees work for and on their employment relationships.</p>
Resources	Legislation (Parliament, April 17, 2025)
Hungary (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Career</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tax-exemption scheme for working mothers announced — key date: October 2025

Ireland (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)**Development****Career — Health — Wealth**

- [Wage threshold for PRSI contributions to increase](#) — key date: Oct. 1, 2025

Wealth

- [Small delay for start of 'My Future Fund' for pension autoenrollment](#) — key date: unknown
- [More details on Auto Enrollment scheme published](#) — key date: Sept. 20, 2025
- [Pension-related issues included in Finance Bill](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026

Jordan (previously covered, soon to be effective)**Status****Effective June 15, 2025****Development****Health****Doctors' fees to increase**

The revised Doctors' Fee Schedule is expected to take effect on June 15, 2025, following an agreement reached between insurance companies and the Jordan Medical Association. A new fee schedule had been negotiated in 2024 and should have taken effect in July 2024, but the government unexpectedly revoked the fee schedule, citing errors in the regulation. The government then announced that the 2008 fee schedule would continue to apply until a consensus could be reached on the new fee schedule.

Resourcesdina.shaer@mercermarshbenefits.com**Netherlands (new)****Status****Effective July 1, 2025****Development****Career****Minimum wage to increase**

From July 1, 2025, the gross hourly minimum wage will be €14.40/hour, up from €14.06/hour, for employees aged 21 and older. The minimum wage is increased every six months on January 1 and July 1.

Resources[Minimum wage information](#) (Dutch) (Government)**Oman (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)****Development****Career — Health**

- [Social protection for foreign employees expanded](#) — key date: July 2025

Qatar (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)**Development****Career**

- [Nationalization program launched to boost employment rate](#) — key date: unknown

Saudi Arabia (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)**Development****Career**[Revised national hiring targets for certain sectors issued](#) — key date: July 27, 2025

South Africa (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development

Career

- [Expanded remuneration and pay gap disclosures required](#) — key date: Upon proclamation

Spain (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development

Career — Health

- [New paid family leave entitlement](#) — key date: unknown

Sweden (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development

Wealth

- [Flexibility of receiving occupational pension benefit payments increased](#) — key date: Oct. 1, 2025

Switzerland (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development

Career — Health

- [Paid parental leave introduced in Geneva](#) — key date: unknown

United Arab Emirates — Abu Dhabi (new)

Status



Currently effective

Development

Health

Health coverage for certain medical and health conditions clarified

Abu Dhabi's Department of Health has issued a clarification — DOH Circular 41/2025 — about (1) the coverage for pregnancy and childbirth healthcare benefits that must be included in health insurance for employees/workers and their family members; (2) the insurance coverage for certain hereditary and genetic diseases or congenital malformations; and (3) the application of the Abu Dhabi Basic Plan indicator in the Department of Health Drugs List for outpatient coverage. Highlights of the clarification include:

Pregnancy and childbirth

Under Article 5 of Law No. 23/2025, employers must provide health insurance coverage for all employees/workers and their immediate family members, and the coverage must include pregnancy and childbirth. The heads of household must provide health insurance coverage — including pregnancy and childbirth — for those individuals under their responsibility but who are not covered by their employer. The employer or head of household must pay the cost of the health insurance premium for pregnancy and childbirth coverage and cannot recover any part of their obligation percentage from the insured individual.

- The policy must cover basic medical treatment including treatment following pregnancy and childbirth (examination, diagnosis and treatment services for gynecology and pregnancy in centers and clinics) and hospital accommodation for all types of childbirth (considering the waiting period for hospitalization of high-cost diseases).
- Clarification of the measures that will be applicable if a woman is not insured for pregnancy and childbirth.

Hereditary, genetic and congenital malformations

- Clarification of the definitions of congenital malformations and specified exclusions from health insurance coverage in Department of Health (DOH) compliant health insurance policies.

Application of the Abu Dhabi Basic Plan indicator in the DOH Drugs List.

- The basic plan applies only to drugs prescribed for outpatients. However, some drugs may be eligible for separate reimbursement, subject to claims and adjudication rules, regardless of the indicator. Any drug that is eligible for coverage under the Basic Policy will be covered under all other health insurance policies.

Resources

[DOL Circular 41/2025](#) (Department of Health, March 18, 2025)

United Kingdom (UK) (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Wealth</p> <p>The Pension Regulator’s annual funding statement published</p> <p>The Pensions Regulator (TPR) published its 2025 Annual Funding Statement and supporting analysis on April 29, 2025, setting out its latest expectations for trustees of defined benefit pension schemes. TPR’s analysis reveals that the majority of schemes are now in healthy funding positions, and so it expects many trustees will turn their focus towards “endgame” planning, while others will continue to concentrate on recovering deficits. All trustees should ensure that they consider the funding, investment and covenant risks that arise from current global trade and geopolitical uncertainty. Separately, TPR notes that it is good practice for trustees to have a policy on releasing surplus and it suggests they could prepare for possible surplus release requests from sponsors. While any current surplus release must meet current legislative requirements and current scheme rules, TPR acknowledges that the government plans to legislate for changes in this area in the forthcoming Pension Schemes Bill in summer 2025.</p>
Resources	<p>richard.wyatt@mercer.com</p> <p>Annual Funding Statement 2025 (TPR, April 29, 2025)</p>
UK (new)	
Status	 Voluntary initiative
Development	<p>Wealth</p> <p>Many large workplace pension providers sign Mansion House Accord</p> <p>On May 13, 2025, 17 of the largest workplace pension providers in the UK, including Mercer and NOW: Pensions, signed the voluntary initiative known as the Mansion House Accord to commit to the ambition of investing at least 10% of their main defined contribution (DC) default funds in private markets by 2030, with at least 5% allocated to UK private markets. The initiative aims to achieve better outcomes for savers while boosting investment in the UK.</p> <p>The Mansion House Accord builds on the Mansion House Compact, signed in July 2023 by 11 UK pension providers, which committed to allocating 5% of DC default funds in unlisted equities, including venture capital and growth equity, by 2030. For providers signed up to both initiatives, progress under the Compact counts towards meeting the Accord’s goals.</p> <p>To support this initiative, the government has committed to facilitating a pipeline of UK investment opportunities and delivering the Value for Money framework.</p>
Resources	<p>richard.wyatt@mercer.com</p> <p>Pension schemes back British growth (Government, May 13, 2025) and The Mansion House Accord (The ABI)</p>

UK (new)	
Status	 White paper
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>White paper on immigration, measures to reduce net migration issued</p> <p>On May 12, 2025, the UK government issued a white paper outlining reforms of its immigration system that aim to encourage employers to increase their training and recruitment of workers from the UK. Some measures will be introduced quickly, but others do not yet have an effective date and could require consultation and further evidence-based input. Highlights of the measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Skilled Worker visa will be restricted to graduate-level roles. The number of dependent family members that visa holders could bring to the UK will be reduced and increased salary thresholds will apply to this visa category. • The Immigration Salary List will be abolished. • The application procedures for Global Talent visas for science and design roles will be simplified. Other visa routes will be open to research interns in artificial intelligence and businesses that are establishing a UK presence. • Industry sectors that rely on high levels of sponsorship will have to develop a workforce strategy that includes commitments to skills, training and working conditions, and the engagement of economically inactive individuals in the UK. • The Immigration Skills Charge (ISC) paid by employers will increase by 32% to £1,320 per year up from £1,000 for medium and large employer sponsors, and to £480 (up from £364 per year) for small or third sector sponsors. • Improved English language proficiency will be required for visa applicants and their dependents, including an assessment of their improved proficiency. • Sponsored workers could be allowed to move between sponsoring employers, but employers will face “innovative” penalties and sanctions where the sponsorship system is abused. Other measures aim to address illegal working. • The care work visa will be abolished. Employers will be expected to recruit from among international care workers who are already in the UK and take steps to attract more domestic workers into the care sector. • International students would still be allowed to temporarily work in the UK after graduation from a UK university, but this would be reduced to 18 months. • The standard qualifying period for “earned settlement” in the UK would generally increase to 10 years, up from five. A consultation on the proposed changes will be issued later in 2025. The requirements for “earned citizenship” would also be revised to align with the “earned settlement” route. • A new Labour Market Evidence Group with responsibility for recommending different workforce strategies will be established.
Resources	Restoring control over the immigration system: White paper (Government, May 12, 2025)

UK	
Status	 Consultation is open through June 30, 2025.
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Consultation on equality reforms issued</p> <p>The government has issued a consultation on proposed reforms to eight aspects of equality law that will help shape the Equality (Race and Disability) Bill, with comments invited through June 30, 2025. They include establishment of the Equal Pay Regulatory and Enforcement Unit, with the involvement of trade unions; improved pay transparency; expansion of equal pay reporting to include race and disability; inclusion of outsourced workers in equal pay rules; stronger protection against combined discrimination provisions; and expansion of the protection against sexual harassment to volunteers. Other topics address the public sector equality duty and implementation of the socioeconomic duty for public authorities in England.</p>
Resources	Equality law call for evidence (Government, April 7, 2025)
UK (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Career — Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paternity leave to be expanded to bereaved partners — key date: unknown • Benefits-in-kind digitization reporting confirmed — key date: April 2026 <p>Wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pension auto enrollment to expand, reducing eligible age and abolishing earnings threshold — key date: unknown



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