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Global Legislative Update

March 2026

Law & Policy Group
By Stephanie Rosseau and Fiona Webster



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.

1. Highlights	3
2. Global	7
3. Americas	9
4. Asia Pacific	34
5. Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA)	50

Section 1

Highlights

Global	
Artificial Intelligence	Global employer resources
Minimum wage rates	Global employer resources
Remote working	Global employer resources
Reproductive rights	Global employer resources post-Dobbs ruling
Right to disconnect	Global employer resources
Americas	
Argentina	Pension and social security benefits increased in March Labor modernization bill advances in Parliament
Canada	Minimum wage to increase in British Columbia Minimum wage to increase in New Brunswick Minimum wage to increase in Yukon
Colombia	Minimum wage increased Special pension regime for high-risk occupations extended
Dominican Republic	Minimum wage increased
Mexico	Unit of measure used to determine penalties for labor and employment breaches updated
United States	National Labor Relations Board formally reinstates 2020 joint-employer standard Prescription drug data collection reporting instructions and templates for the 2025 reference year released Executive order calls for changes to ERISA proxy voting rules Applicability date for final required minimum distribution regulations delayed again Mercer projects certain 2027 benefit figures Improved transparency into pharmacy benefit manager fee disclosures proposed Rules to determine employee or independent contractor proposed Bill would mandate auto-enrollment retirement plans for employers Roundup: Employer resources on H-1B reforms Roundup: Employer resources on tax deduction for overtime pay

Americas (continued)

United States

[Roundup: 2025 state paid family and medical leave contributions and benefits](#)
[Domestic partner benefits remain popular, but present challenges](#)
[Roundup: State accrued paid leave mandates](#)
[Beyond COBRA: State laws add complexity to continuation coverage](#)
[Group fixed-indemnity plans pose legal and tax issues](#)
[User's guide to SECURE 2.0](#)
[Transportation plans offer valued benefits, but pose compliance issues](#)
[Roundup: Employer resources on noncompete restrictions](#)
[Roundup: Employer resources on the changing landscape of DEI](#)
[Some states require group health plan reporting](#)
[Resources for tracking state and local retirement initiatives](#)
[Roundup: Employer resources on states' recent equal pay laws](#)
[Roundup: Employer resources on states' recreational marijuana laws](#)
[Roundup: Employer resources on minimum wage increases](#)
[Roundup: Employer resources on hairstyle nondiscrimination laws](#)
[New 'Workplace know your rights act' in California requires employer action](#)
[Enforcement of pay data disclosure law in California enacted](#)
[Pharmacy benefit manager regulations in Maine clarified](#)
[Health Savings Account compatibility law enacted in New York](#)
[Effective date of paid family medical leave law's application to construction workers in New York clarified](#)
[Trapped at Work Act amended in New York](#)
[Benefit and leave laws vary in Puerto Rico](#)
[Paid family medical leave — short time disability prohibition extended in Washington, DC](#)

Asia Pacific

Australia

[Intra-fund transfer relief for superannuation trustees proposed](#)
[Larger employers must select and report against gender targets](#)
[Anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing changes will impact superannuation funds](#)
[Bills address reduced tax concessions on high superannuation balances](#)
[Low Income Superannuation Tax Offset amendments bill introduced](#)
[Proposals to enhance oversight and governance of managed investment schemes issued](#)
[Sustainable investment product labelling proposed](#)

Asia Pacific (continued)	
China	Trial version of National Long-term care insurance catalog issued New drug catalog and health insurance guidelines published Measures related to floating work injury premium rates introduced in Shanghai
Hong Kong	Minimum wage to increase
India	Explanatory handbook on new labor codes issued
Japan	New gender reporting disclosures required
New Zealand	Employment relations framework modernized
Singapore	Minimum salary requirements for foreign work passes to increase
South Korea	Supreme Court ruling confirms management performance pay is not considered wages for severance pay calculation Implementation plans, effective date for labor relations law announced
Taiwan	Visa and immigration rules for certain foreign workers eased
Vietnam	Maternity, paternity leaves to increase
Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA)	
European Union (EU)	Sustainability reporting and due diligence simplification measures agreed upon
Belgium	Bereavement leave expanded Transportation benefits increased Tax reforms include cap on benefits-in-kind value
France	Gender quotas for senior executives, management teams imposed
Italy	Flexibility of parental leave entitlement increased
Jersey, Channel Islands	Minimum wage to increase
Isle of Man	Minimum wage to increase
Mauritius	Minimum wage increased
Morocco	Tax increased on workers' compensation to insurance products, services
Portugal	Partial tax exemption scheme for bonus payments introduced
Romania	Private pension framework from 2027 revised
South Africa	Law changed to allow enforcement of employers' timely contributions to benefit funds Minimum wage increased Labor law changes proposed

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Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) (continued)	
Spain	Minimum interprofessional salary increased
Sweden	Temporary parental benefit scope expanded
United Arab Emirates	Minimum salary for Emirati nationals increased
United Kingdom	Draft legislation in response to Virgin Media legal decision issued
	Employment Rights Act 2025: Measures taking effect in April 2026 in Great Britain
	Bereaved partner's paternity leave updated in Great Britain
	New paternity, parental leave entitlements to take effect in Great Britain

Section 2


Global



Artificial Intelligence	
Status	 Ongoing initiatives
Development	Career Roundup: Global employer resources on artificial intelligence 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.
Resources	Roundup , regularly updated
Minimum wage	
Status	 Ongoing initiatives
Development	Career Roundup: Global employer resources on minimum wage increases 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, news articles, and viewpoints.
Resources	Roundup , regularly updated
Reproductive rights	
Status	 Ongoing initiatives
Development	Health Roundup: Global employer resources on reproductive rights post-Dobbs 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

Remote working	
Status	 Ongoing initiatives
Development	Career — Health — Wealth Roundup: Countries address remote-working issues 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 provides links to government information, third-party analyses, 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 analysis news articles, and viewpoints.
Resources	Roundup , regularly updated

Section 3

Americas

Argentina (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	Wealth Pension and social security benefits increased in March Resolution 38/2026 establishes a 2.88% increase in March 2026 for pension and social security benefits. The benefit adjustments follow the legally established mobility formula and aim to protect individuals' purchasing power. The official amounts are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mobility increase: 2.88%• Legal minimum benefit: AR\$369,600.88• Maximum pension benefit: AR\$2,487,063.95• Minimum taxable remuneration: AR\$124,481.49• Maximum taxable remuneration: AR\$4,045,590.45• Basic Universal Pension (PBU): AR\$169,075.53• Universal Pension for Older Adults (PUAM): AR\$295,680.70.• Extraordinary pension bonus: AR\$70,000 for minimum benefits was published on February 25, 2026.
Resources	Resolution 38/2026 (Spanish) (Official Bulletin, February 18, 2026) and Decree 109/2026 (Spanish) (February 25, 2026)

Argentina (new)	
Status	 Effective date unknown
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Labor modernization bill approved by Parliament</p> <p>The Labor Modernization Bill was approved by parliament on February 27, 2026, and awaits publication in the official journal. The measures aim to modernize regulations, reduce legal disputes, and encourage formal employment and investment. Further measures that provide more details about the Act's provisions are forthcoming. Highlights of the law include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update of definitions used in employment contracts and relationships, including allowing new contract types and part-time work. • Establishment of regulations for remote work (telecommuting). • Revision of severance pay rules to create a more balanced system. • Changed collective bargaining processes, with new guidelines for union representation and sector-wide agreements. • Encouragement of labor formalization and job creation.
Resources	Announcement (Spanish) (Government, February 18, 2026)
Brazil (previously covered, with an upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Career</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payroll tax to increase — key date: January 1, 2027 <p>Career — Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of psychosocial risks in risk management process postponed — key date: May 26, 2026
Canada — British Columbia (new)	
Status	 Effective June 1, 2026
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Minimum wage to increase</p> <p>On June 1, 2026, the minimum wage will increase to C\$18.25/hour, up from C\$17.85/hour. This minimum wage rate is automatically adjusted each year based on the average change in British Columbia's CPI.</p>
Resources	Press release (Government, February 26, 2026)

Canada — New Brunswick (new)**Status**  **Effective April 1, 2026****Development** **Career**
Minimum wage to increase

On April 1, 2026, the minimum wage will increase to C\$15.90/hour, up from C\$15.65/hour.

Resources [Minimum wage, overtime and minimum pay for reporting for work](#) (Government)**Canada — Yukon (new)****Status**  **Effective April 1, 2026****Development** **Career**
Minimum wage to increase

On April 1, 2026, the minimum wage will increase to C\$18.51/hour, up from C\$17.94/hour.

Resources [The Yukon's minimum wage set to increase](#) (Government, February 5, 2026)**Canada (previously covered, with an upcoming effective date)****Development** **Career**

- [Minimum wage to increase in Nova Scotia](#) — key date: April 1, 2026
- [Minimum wage to increase in Quebec](#) — key date: May 1, 2026

Career — Health

- ["Right-to-disconnect" established for employees](#) — key date: Unknown



Wealth

- [Basic rate for pension plans set](#) — key date: April 1, 2026
- [Pension super priority federal legislation enacted](#) — key date: April 27, 2027



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

On February 19, 2026, Colombia's president announced that the 23% increase to the minimum wage will be reinstated — it had been suspended on Feb. 13, 2026, by a high court that gave the government eight days to issue a new decree together with an economic justification for the increase. Previously, the government had announced that the 2026 monthly minimum wage would be COP\$1,750,905, up from COP\$1,423,500.



Resources [Announcement](#) (Spanish) (Government, February 19, 2026); [Ruling](#) (Spanish) (High Court, February 2, 2026) and [Decree Number 1469](#) (Ministry of Labor, December 29, 2025)


Colombia (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Wealth</p> <p>Special pension regime for high-risk occupations extended</p> <p>Colombia’s Ministry of Labor issued Decree 1435 of 2025, which extends the special pension regime for workers in high-risk occupations. The new decree will remain effective until Congress enacts legislation to regulate early retirement pensions for individuals engaged in high-risk activities.</p> <p>Originally established under Decree-Law 2090 of 2003, the special pension regime was set to expire in December 2025.</p>
Resources	Decree 1435 of 2025 (Spanish) (Government, December 24, 2025)
Colombia (previously covered, with an upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Career — Wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor laws revised, worker protections expanded — key date: July 1, 2026 • New regulation on provision of breastfeeding spaces issued — key date: July 1, 2026 <p>Wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pension reforms issued — key date: Postponed from July 1, 2025, pending judicial decision
Dominican Republic (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Minimum wage increased</p> <p>On Feb. 1, 2026, the minimum wage increased to 29,988 DOP/month for employees in large companies; 27,489.60 DOP/month for employees in medium-sized companies; 18,421.20 DOP for employees in small companies; and 16,993.20 DOP for employees in micro-businesses.</p>
Resources	Notice (Spanish) (President’s office, February 2, 2026)

Mexico (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Unit of measure used to determine penalties for labor and employment breaches updated</p> <p>On January 12, 2026, Mexico announced the increased Unit of Measure (UMA) for 2026, effective on February 1, 2026. Updated annually by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography, the UMA is used to determine the penalties, fines and other contributions related to employer breaches of labor and employment obligations. The 2026 UMA rates (3.69% more than 2025) are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily rate: MXN \$117.31 • Monthly rate: MXN \$3,566.22 • Annual rate: MXN \$42,794.64.
Resources	UMA (Spanish) (Government, January 12, 2026)
Panama (previously covered, with an upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer social security contributions increased — key date: March 1, 2027
Peru (previously covered, with an upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Career — Wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pension system modernization law issued — Key dates: 2027 and 2028 <p>Wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulations to support pension system reform issued — key date: starting in June 2027
United States (US) (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>National Labor Relations Board formally reinstates 2020 joint-employer standard</p> <p>On February 27, 2026, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) formally reinstated its 2020 joint-employer standard established by the first Trump administration and withdrew the 2023 rule established by the Biden administration.</p> <p>As background, in March 2024, a district court issued an order vacating the 2023 rule. Since then, there has been legal uncertainty as to the standard. The NLRB is now revising its rules and regulations to replace the vacated regulatory text with the previous version of its rules. Under the 2020 standard, a company is deemed a joint employer only if it exercises “substantial direct and immediate control” over the essential terms and conditions of another company’s employees. This standard is more rigid than the 2023 rule.</p>
Resources	Withdrawal of 2023 standard for determining joint employer status (Federal Register, February 27, 2026)

US (new)	
Status	 Filing is due June 1, 2026
Development	Health Prescription drug data collection reporting instructions and templates for the 2025 reference year released The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released the Prescription Drug Data Collection (RxDC) reporting instructions and templates for the 2025 reference year. An updated version of the RxDC drug name and therapeutic class crosswalk will be posted mid-March. Please note that there are no substantive changes to the reporting instructions from the 2024 reference year. The RxDC filing is due June 1, 2026. CMS says that HIOS will begin accepting submissions for the 2025 reference year in mid-April.
Resources	RxDC reporting instructions (CMS, February 2026) and RxDC templates and data dictionary (CMS, February 2026)
US (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	Wealth Executive order calls for changes to ERISA proxy voting rules A recent executive order (EO) directs the Department of Labor (DOL) to consider treating proxy advisors as ERISA investment advice fiduciaries. The order also instructs the agency to take other actions to increase scrutiny of proxy advisors' practices, particularly those involving diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations. The EO is part of the Trump administration's broader campaign to limit the influence of proxy advisor firms and discourage DEI and ESG investment practices. Although the EO doesn't lay out any specific timelines for DOL to act, plan sponsors and fiduciaries that vote proxies or use proxy advisors should be on the lookout for forthcoming agency guidance.
Resources	margaret.berger@mercer.com and matthew.calloway@mercer.com GRIST , February 19, 2026

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US (new)	
Status	 Delayed until 2027 at the earliest
Development	Wealth Applicability date for final required minimum distribution regulations delayed again The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for the second time delayed the applicability date for a portion of upcoming final regulations on SECURE 2.0 Act of 2022 (Div. T of Pub. L. No. 117-328) changes to the required minimum distribution (RMD) rules for employer-sponsored retirement plans and IRAs. The regulations now won't apply until the first calendar year that begins more than six months after the final regulations are published — that is, not before 2027 at the earliest. Until then, taxpayers must comply with a reasonable, good-faith interpretation of the SECURE 2.0 provisions to which the delayed regulations relate.
Resources	margaret.berger@mercer.com and brian.kearney@mercer.com GRIST , March 2, 2026
US (new)	
Status	 Projected 2027 figures
Development	Health Mercer projects certain 2027 benefit figures Mercer projects the 2027 inflation-adjusted amounts for health savings accounts (HSAs), high-deductible health plans (HDHPs), and excepted-benefit health reimbursement arrangements (HRAs) will increase from 2026 levels. These unofficial 2027 amounts are determined using the Internal Revenue Code (IRC)'s cost-of-living adjustment methods, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) published Chained Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (C-CPI-U) values through January 2026, and Mercer's projected C-CPI-U values for February and March.
Resources	margaret.berger@mercer.com , dorian.smith@mercer.com , and james.chakan@mercer.com GRIST , February 24, 2026

US (new)	
Status	 Proposal
Development	<p>Health</p> <p>Improved transparency into pharmacy benefit manager fee disclosures proposed</p> <p>Days before the 2026 Consolidated Appropriations Act passed and added new pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) transparency requirements, the Department of Labor (DOL) proposed a rule to improve transparency into PBM fee disclosures. The rule implements President Trump’s Executive Order 14273, which instructed DOL to improve transparency into the direct and indirect compensation received by PBMs for health plan fiduciaries. The rule would require covered service providers (including PBMs and others) to disclose extensive compensation information to plan fiduciaries of self-funded (but not insured) group health plans subject to ERISA. Covered service providers include providers of PBM services and providers of advice, recommendations, or referrals regarding PBM services who are also providers of PBM services or their affiliates. (Non-affiliated brokers and consultants remain subject to current disclosure rules under ERISA.) In each case, the covered service provider must reasonably expect to receive \$1,000 or more in compensation.</p> <p>Covered service providers that contract with ERISA plans would be required to disclose compensation information in advance and semi-annually. The compensation disclosed in advance would be estimates, while the semi-annual disclosure would be actual compensation received. Disclosures would need to be made in the aggregate and by drug on the formulary where applicable (e.g., manufacturer payments and spread compensation).</p> <p>The rule would allow, but not require, plan fiduciaries to audit the accuracy of disclosures annually, receive other necessary information, and provide relief for plan fiduciaries if their PBM or other covered service provider fails to meet its obligation.</p> <p>As proposed, the rule would take effect for plan years beginning on or after July 1, 2026. Because the rule overlaps in many ways with PBM reforms in the 2026 CAA, the hope is that the DOL will rework its proposals to account for provisions under the new law while providing adequate lead time for compliance.</p>
Resources	<p>cheryl.hughes@mercero.com</p> <p>Improving transparency into pharmacy benefit manager fee disclosure (Federal Register, Jan. 30, 2026); Extensive PBM transparency reforms now law (Mercer, Feb. 5, 2026) and Lowering Drug Prices by Once Again Putting Americans First (Federal Register, April 15, 2025)</p>

US (new)

Status



Consultation is open until April 28, 2026

Development

Career — Health — Wealth

Rules to determine employee or independent contractor proposed



On February 26, 2026, the Department of Labor (DOL) proposed rules to revise its analysis for distinguishing between employees and independent contractors under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The DOL proposes to rescind a 2024 rule issued by the Biden administration that it is no longer applying in its investigations and replace it with the earlier streamlined analysis applied by the first Trump administration. The DOL would apply this analysis to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (MSPA), both of which incorporate the FLSA's relevant definitions. The proposal:

- Adopts an “economic reality” test to determine a worker’s status as an employee or independent contractor, examining whether a worker is in business for him- or herself (independent contractor) or is economically dependent on a potential employer for work (employee)
- Identifies and explains two core factors: (1) the nature and degree of the worker’s control over the work and (2) the worker’s opportunity for profit or loss based on initiative and/or investment. These are the factors that federal courts primarily consider answering the question of whether a worker is economically dependent on someone else’s business or is in business for him- or herself.
- Identifies three other factors relevant to the analysis, particularly when the two core factors do not point to the same classification: (1) the amount of skill required for the work; (2) the degree of permanence of the working relationship between the worker and the potential employer; and (3) whether the work is part of an integrated unit of production; and also note that additional factors may be considered in the analysis.
- Advises that the parties’ actual practices are more relevant than what may be contractually or theoretically possible
- Provides eight examples of how the economic reality factors would apply in certain real-life situations.



FAQs on the proposal have also been issued, and comments can be submitted until April 28, 2026.



Resources

[Notice of Proposed Rule: Employee or Independent Contractor Status Under the Fair Labor Standards Act, Family and Medical Leave Act, and Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act, RIN 1235-AA46](#) (Department of Labor, February 26, 2026) and [Withdrawal of 2023 standard for determining joint employer status](#) (Federal Register, February 27, 2026)

US (new)	
Status	 Proposal
Development	Wealth Bill would mandate auto-enrollment retirement plans for employers Recently introduced House legislation — the Automatic IRA Act of 2025 (HR 6722) — would effectively require most private-sector employers that don't already sponsor a retirement plan either to maintain an “automatic contribution plan” or enroll employees in automatic individual retirement arrangements (IRAs) beginning in 2028. The bill would also direct the Treasury Department to provide guidance enabling automatic IRAs for independent contractors and gig workers. Sponsored by Rep. Richard Neal, D-MA, the bill is similar to a version he introduced in the prior Congress, except that it contains a new provision with special rules for employers who use professional employer organizations (PEOs). While the new measure is unlikely to advance this year in the Republican-controlled House, the bill has support from industry trade groups and could get a boost next year if Democrats win control of the House.
Resources	geoff.manville@mercer.com ; Margaret.berger@mercer.com ; and matthew.calloway@mercer.com GRIST , February 13, 2026
US	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	Career Roundup: Employer resources on tax deduction for overtime pay On July 4, 2025, President Trump signed the “One Big Beautiful Bill,” which includes a federal income tax deduction on nonexempt workers’ overtime pay covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act. The overtime tax deduction is currently scheduled to expire after 2028. To provide employers with some information about the deduction and the varying aspects and issues to consider, this roundup provides links to government information, third-party analyses, news articles, and viewpoints.
Resources	Roundup: Employer resources on tax deduction for overtime , regularly updated

US	
Status	 Ongoing developments
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Roundup: Employer resources on H-1B reforms</p> <p>On Sept. 19, 2025, President Trump signed a proclamation to restrict the entry into the US of H-1B alien workers in specialty occupations, requiring a \$100,000 payment to accompany or supplement H-1B visa petitions for new applications. Other planned H1-B changes were also included in the proclamation. Guidance in response to the proclamation was issued by US Citizenship and Immigration Services, US Customs and Border Protection (USCIS), the Department of State, and the Department of Homeland Security. However, implementation of the proclamation has caused confusion among employers and H-1B holders. On Sept. 20, 2025, the Chamber of Commerce released the following statement: “We’re concerned about the impact on employees, their families, and American employers. We’re working with the Administration and our members to understand the full implications and the best path forward.” On Dec. 29, 2025, USCIS published a final rule that will replace the prior random lottery process for the selection of new H-1B visas with a system that prioritizes the allocation of visas to higher skilled and higher paid foreign workers.</p> <p>To provide employers with some information about the new H-1B visa requirements and the varying aspects and issues to consider, this roundup provides links to government information, third-party analyses, news articles, and viewpoints.</p>
Resources	Roundup: Employer resources on H-1B reforms , regularly updated
US	
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 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	rich.glass@mercer.com and katharine.marshall@mercer.com GRIST , updated January 29, 2025 and Paid family and medical leave: Snapshots across the US (Mercer, September 23, 2025)

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	 Effective dates vary
Development	Career — Health Roundup: State accrued paid leave mandates More than one-third of all states have some form of accrued paid leave requirement. These laws have certain common features, including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which employers must comply, and which employees can accrue and take paid leave• How much paid leave employees may accumulate, use and carry over from one year to the next• Whether a new hire waiting period is permissible before using accrued paid leave, and whether leave may be accrued and/or taken in increments other than one hour• Whether employers may front-load or credit total annual paid leave at the start of each year and avoid the need to track hourly accruals or provide year-end carryovers• What reasons — in addition to an employee’s own illness — justify the use of accrued paid leave• What notice or documentation employers may require employees to provide, and what information about the paid leave entitlement employers must provide to employees• What protections — in addition to job — apply to employees who exercise rights to accrued paid leave• Whether employers must pay out unused accrued leave when employees separate from service, and what rules apply when an individual is rehired• Requirements typically don’t apply to employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) in effect at the time of a law’s passage.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com and katharine.marshall@mercer.com Roundup: State accrued paid leave mandates (Mercer, 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 , November 12, 2024
US	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	Health Group fixed-indemnity plans post legal and 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 , August 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 nonbenefit-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 is 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	Career — Health Transportation plans offer valued benefits, but pose compliance issues 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. 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 adds 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.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com and cheryl.hughes@mercer.com GRIST , regularly updated
US	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	Career Roundup: Employer resources on the changing landscape of DEI 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 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.
Resources	Roundup , regularly updated

US



Status	 Effective dates vary
Development	Career Roundup: Employer resources on noncompete restrictions Noncompete agreements prevent former employees from working for a competing employer or starting a competing business for a certain time period after their employment ends. At the federal level, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), under the Biden administration, finalized a rule banning noncompetes. In August 2024, a federal judge in Texas blocked the rule from taking effect nationwide. While the FTC appealed the decision, the current FTC, under the Trump administration, will not defend this rule. At the moment, it is unclear as to what position the FTC will take on noncompete agreements. On Sept. 4, 2025, the FTC launched a public inquiry to better understand the scope, prevalence and effects of employer noncompete actions, as well as to gather information to inform possible enforcement actions. 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 analyses, news articles, and viewpoints.
Resources	Roundup , regularly updated

US — States

Status	 Compliance dates vary
Development	Health Some states require group health plan sponsor reporting 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.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com and dorian.smith@mercer.com GRIST , regularly updated

US — States	
Status	 Effective dates vary
Development	Wealth Resources for tracking state and local retirement initiatives 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.
Resources	margaret.berger@mercer.com and brian.kearney@mercer.com GRIST , regularly updated
US — States	
Status	 Effective dates vary
Development	Career Roundup: Employer resources on states' recent equal pay laws 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 government information, third-party analyses, news articles, and viewpoints. Certain cities have also acted, but they are generally beyond the scope of this roundup.
Resources	Roundup , regularly updated

US — States	
Status	 Effective dates vary
Development	Career Roundup: Employer resources on states' recreational marijuana laws 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 government information, third-party analyses, 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.
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 government information, third-party analyses, news articles, and viewpoints.
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 is meant 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, this roundup provides links to government information, third-party analyses, news articles, and viewpoints.
Resources	Roundup , regularly updated
US — California (previously covered, soon to be effective)	
Status	 Notice requirement is already effective, and process needs to be established by March 31, 2026
Development	Career New 'Workplace know your rights act' requires employer action The new "Workplace know your rights act" (SB 294) is meant to provide employees with a strong understanding of their workplace and constitutional rights. Employers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide employees with a specific written notice regarding their workplace rights by February 1, 2026 and annually thereafter. A template notice was issued by the Labor Commissioner.• Establish a process for employees to designate an emergency contact in case the employee is arrested or detained by March 31, 2026.• Employers that violate the law are subject to specified penalties.
Resources	SB 294 (Legislature, October 12, 2025)

US — California (new)

Status



Currently effective

Development

Career



Enforcement of pay data disclosure law enacted



California recently enacted legislation (SB 464) that strengthens the enforcement of pay data reporting, among other changes, effective January 1, 2026. As background, private employers that have 100 or more employees must submit an annual pay data report to the Civil Rights Department that includes the number of employees by race, ethnicity, and sex in 10 specified job categories; the number of employees by race, ethnicity, and sex whose pay falls within federal pay bands; within each job category the median and mean hourly rate for employees having any combination of those characteristics; and the total number of hours worked by each employee counted in each pay band during the “Reporting Year,” as specified. Highlights of the new requirements include:



- Employers must collect and store any demographic information gathered by an employer or labor contractor for the purpose of submitting the pay data report separately from employees’ personnel records, and, beginning January 1, 2027, increase the number of job categories to 23 (the federal government’s standard occupational classification code).
- Courts are required to impose a civil penalty on employers that fail to file the report if requested by the Civil Rights Department. Previously, imposing the civil penalty was optional.
- Employers must store demographic data separately from personnel records.

Resources

[SB 464](#) (Legislature, October 13, 2025)

US — Maine (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	Health Pharmacy benefit manager regulations clarified Last year, a law banned spread pricing by insurers and pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs). In February 2026, the Maine Bureau of Insurance (MBI) issued regulations clarifying the scope of this law. The spread pricing prohibition in 2025 Pub. Law 291 (LD 1580) extended to carriers and PBMs. Its applicability was not limited to fully insured plans. As a result, the law potentially applied to PBMs working on behalf of self-funded ERISA plans, raising ERISA preemption concerns. However, Rule 210 provides insight to how MBI will enforce the law, limiting the spread pricing ban to a “carrier or PBM under contract with a carrier [emphasis added] ...” This appears to exclude self-funded ERISA plans, despite the broad statutory definition, which includes any “entity that ... manages the prescription drug coverage provided by the carrier, self-insurance plan or other 3rd-party payer.” Rule 210 specifically excludes self-funded multiple employer welfare arrangements, MaineCare (the state’s Medicaid program) and the state employee health plan. The regulations also confirm that PBMs owe a fiduciary duty to carriers, encompassing these obligations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Act prudently and solely in the best interest of the carrier• Account for and disclose to the carrier all compensation• Ensure compliance with all other statutory and regulatory requirements. Rule 210 took effect on February 8, 2026.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com Rule 210 (Bureau of Insurance, February 2026) and 2025 Pub. Law 291 (LD 1580) (Legislature, June 12, 2025)
US — New York (new)	
Status	 Effective for plan years starting in 2027
Development	Health Health Savings Account compatibility law enacted Under 2026 Ch. 62 (SB 8772), all insurance coverage mandates applicable to individual plans and group and blanket plans apply to HSA-qualifying high-deductible health plans (HDHPs) only after the plan’s deductible has been satisfied, if to do otherwise would make a participant HSA-ineligible. Previously, the rule was based on the annually adjusted minimum deductible in § 223 of the Internal Revenue Code and also applied to HDHPs offered with a health reimbursement arrangement. The law will take effect for plan years starting in 2027.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com 2026 Ch. 62 (SB 8772) (Legislature, February 13, 2026)

US — New York (updated)	
Status	 Effective January 1, 2027
Development	Career — Health Effective date of paid family medical leave law’s application to construction workers clarified A December 2025 law extended PFML eligibility to certain construction employees. As written the law was to take immediate effect, but a state FAQ noted a January 1, 2027, effective date. Under 2026 Ch. 72 (SB 8795), the effective date is officially January 1, 2027. As background, eligibility for New York’s paid family leave (PFL) law requires at least 26 consecutive weeks with the current employer for full-time employees and 175 workdays for part-time employees. 2025 Ch. 651 (AB 4727) makes certain construction employees not meeting those standards eligible for PFL benefits. Construction employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) are eligible if they worked at least 26 of the last 39 weeks with any employer that is a party to the CBA. Construction employees are those who “who perform construction, demolition, reconstruction, excavation, rehabilitation, repairs, renovations, alterations, or improvements.”
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com 2025 Ch. 651 (AB 4727) (Legislature, December 19, 2025) and 2026 Ch. 72 (SB 8795) (Legislature, February 13, 2026)
US — New York (new)	
Status	 Effective December 19, 2026
Development	Career Trapped at Work Act amended On February 13, 2026, New York’s governor signed amendments (A94582) to the recently enacted Trapped at Work Act. Highlights of the changes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An effective date delay by one year to December 19, 2026.• Applicability to employees and prospective employees and not to independent contractors and other workers.• Clarifications of the Act's exception• Employee complaints with the state’s labor commission and the consideration of mitigating factors when assessing noncompliance penalties are allowed.
Resources	A9452 (Legislature) and SB 294 (Legislature, October 12, 2025)

US — Puerto Rico	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	Career — Health Benefit and leave laws vary Puerto Rico is an unincorporated territory within the US with a separate tax code, constitution, and benefit and insurance laws. Nonetheless, many (but not all) US laws apply to this territory of approximately 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.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com GRIST , August 12, 2024
US — Washington, DC (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	Career — Health Paid family medical leave — short time disability prohibition extended Washington, DC, continued its extension of a Universal Paid Leave (UPL) law provision on short-term disability (STD) insurance. The UPL law is the District’s paid family and medical leave mandate. A provision prohibiting STD insurance issued in Washington, DC, from offsetting benefits based on an employee’s estimated or actual UPL benefits does not apply to STD policies issued outside of Washington, DC. As a result, the DC Council and mayor periodically enact temporary legislation to apply the STD insurance offset prohibition to policies issued elsewhere. The latest law is 2026 Act A26-0260 (B-573), which extended the extraterritorial prohibition to May 14, 2026.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com § 32-541.07(Perm). Coordination of benefits (Council of the District of Columbia) and 2026 Act A26-0260 (B-573) (Councils of the District of Columbia, February 19, 2026)

US (previously covered, with upcoming effective dates)

Development

Career

- [Large private employers required to report pay data by race and gender in New York City](#) — key date: Multi-year

Career — Health

- [Paid family and medical leave law tweaked in Maine](#) — key date: May 1, 2026
- [Leave to be required for employee blood and organ donation in Illinois](#) — key date: June 1, 2026
- [Leave required for employees with a child in a neonatal intensive care unit in Illinois](#) — key date: June 1, 2026
- [Job protection for leaves expanded in New Jersey](#) — key date: July 17, 2026
- [Paid family medical leave law delayed in Maryland](#) — key date: January 1, 2027
- [Paid family leave law for unionized construction employees expanded in New York](#) — key date: January 1, 2027
- [Salary and benefit disclosures in job postings to be required in Delaware](#) — key date: September 26, 2027
- [Paid family medical leave law enacted in California](#) — key date: July 1, 2028

Health

- [Regulations on new provider directory standards issued in California](#) — key date: April 1, 2026
- [Prior authorization report law enacted in California](#) — key date: Reports must be provided by July 1, 2026.
- [Upper prescription drug limit set in Colorado](#) — key date: Effective date unknown
- [Telehealth parity extended in New Jersey](#) — key date: July 1, 2026
- [Immunization law enacted in New Mexico](#) — key date: July 1, 2026
- [Prior authorization insurance law enacted in Wyoming](#) — key date: July 1, 2026
- [Insurance law mandates gender detransition coverage in Montana](#) — key date: October 1, 2026
- [State-based exchange delivery to change in Oregon](#) — key date: November 1, 2026
- [Three covered services added to California's benchmark plans](#) — key date: If approved by federal Department of Health and Human Services, inclusion will start in 2027
- [Pharmacy benefit manager law enacted in Colorado](#) — key date: January 1, 2027
- [Obesity and pre-diabetes treatment coverage mandated in Colorado](#) — key date: January 1, 2027
- [Ground ambulance law passed in Illinois](#) — key date: January 1, 2027
- [Telehealth reimbursement parity extended in Hawaii](#) — key date: December 31, 2027

Wealth

- [Employer contributions to Trump accounts can begin](#) — key date: July 2026
- [Rules finalized for SECURE 2.0 'super catch-up' contributions](#) — key date: 2027 plan year
- [Individual Retirement Arrangements' amendment deadline for SECURE acts and more extended](#) — key date: December 31, 2027

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Uruguay (previously covered, with upcoming effective dates)


Development

Career

- [Minimum wage to increase](#) — key date: July 2026

Section 4

Asia Pacific

Australia (new)	
Status	 Proposal
Development	<p>Wealth</p> <p>Intra-fund transfer relief for superannuation trustees proposed</p> <p>The Australian Securities & Investment Commission (ASIC) proposes to extend the relief granted under ASIC Corporations (Superannuation: Accrued Default Amount and Intra-Fund Transfers) Instrument 2016/64 (the ASIC Instrument) for an additional five years until April 1, 2031. If the extension does not occur, the current relief will expire on April 1, 2026. Comments on the proposal were invited through Feb. 18, 2027.</p> <p>This ASIC Instrument exempts trustees of regulated superannuation from the following requirements under the Corporations Act 2001:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The application form in section 1016A• The cooling off period under section 1019A, subject to specified conditions. <p>This relief is similar to the powers granted to successor fund transfers, where the member is transferred between different funds without their consent, typically when closing the member's existing product. In such cases, the application form and cooling off rights are considered unnecessary due to the compulsory nature of the transfer. ASIC considers that members' interests are adequately protected because the new product must provide benefits equivalent to those of the member's previous superannuation interest.</p>
Resources	Proposed extension of relief for intra-fund transfers (ASIC, January 28, 2026)

Australia (new)

Status



Effective April 1, 2026

Development

Career

Larger employers must select and report against gender targets

From April 1, 2026, Australian employers with more than 500 employees must select and report on gender equality targets under updated Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 requirements. Highlights include:

- Employers with over 500 employees, known as Designated Relevant Employers (DREs), including foreign-headquartered companies employing 500 or more staff in Australia, must choose three targets from a list of 19 published by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA).
- Target selection, progress tracking, and compliance assessment will occur in rolling three-year cycles. DREs must submit their Gender Equality Report with their three targets (for the 2026–2029 period) between April 1, 2026, and May 31, 2026. The selected targets must be applicable to the DRE's total workforce, and the 2024–2025 reporting period will serve as the baseline year. DREs must demonstrate progress against their selected targets over the subsequent three years.
- In 2029, after the first cycle, DREs must select three new targets using 2028 data as the new baseline.
- The WGEA will publish each DRE's selected targets and annual progress on its Data Explorer website and include this information in the employer's Executive Summary.
- Failure to select three targets will result in noncompliance with the Act. The WGEA may publicly name noncompliant employers that do not have a reasonable excuse, and they may also become ineligible for government contracts.
- Employers with 100 to 499 employees must continue to lodge annual Gender Equality Reports, but they are not required to designate targets.

Resources

[Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012](#) (Federal Register of Legislation, April 4, 2025); [Who needs to report?](#) (Workplace Gender Equality Agency) and [Gender equality targets menu](#) (Workplace Gender Equality Agency, February 2026)

Australia (updated)

Status



Will generally take effect on March 31, 2026.

Development

Wealth

Anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing changes will impact superannuation funds

The Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Amendment Bill 2024 received Royal Assent on December 10, 2024. The measures will generally take effect on March 31, 2026 and introduced major reforms (AML/CTF reforms) to modernize the regulatory framework and represent a significant step in strengthening the financial system against unlawful activities. These reforms address emerging technologies such as digital payments, close existing regulatory gaps, and align with international standards.

The reforms include the expansion of the scope of regulated entities to include previously unregulated high-risk sectors known as "Tranche 2" entities. This means that from July 1, 2026, trustees of superannuation funds must comply with AML/CTF obligations. These obligations include enrolling with AUSTRAC, developing and maintaining an AML/CTF program, conducting customer due diligence (CDD), reporting certain transactions and suspicious activities, and maintaining appropriate records.

Tranche 2 entities must enroll with AUSTRAC and implement their increased obligations include stronger CDD measures, comprehensive AML programs and updated reporting requirements.

Superannuation funds, in particular, will have to rigorously apply their AML/CTF compliance frameworks, especially when dealing with regulated entities or managing investments involving digital assets or high-risk sectors. They should leverage their risk assessments and due diligence processes to identify and mitigate potential money laundering and terrorism financing risks effectively.

Other reforms in the law aim to improve the effectiveness of the AML/CTF regime by making it simpler and clearer for businesses to comply with their obligations, and modernizing the regime to reflect changing business structures, technologies, and illicit financing methodologies.

Resources

[Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Amendment Bill 2024](#) (Legislature, December 10, 2024)

Australia (new)

Status



Proposals

Development

Wealth

Bills address reduced tax concessions on high superannuation balances

The Government introduced the Treasury Laws Amendment (Building a Stronger and Fairer Super System) Bill 2026 and the Superannuation (Building a Stronger and Fairer Super System) Imposition Bill 2026 that would implement revised reforms to superannuation on tax concessions for higher superannuation balances) (Division 296 tax). The new tax would apply from the 2026-27 income year onward.

This proposed tax measure has been revised since the initial announcement, and includes:


- A revised calculation methodology to avoid taxing unrealised gains (assets that have increased in value but have not been sold).
- A 10% tax on earnings on super balances exceeding AU\$10 million on top of the 15% tax on earnings for balances exceeding AU\$3 million.
- Indexation of the AU\$3 million threshold at Consumer Price Index (CPI) in AU\$150,000 increments, and the AU\$10 million threshold at CPI in AU\$500,000 increments.

The draft legislation also includes consequential amendments related to these calculations, such as adjustments to the Total Super Balance (TSB) values reported for some funds, transitional arrangements for CGT assets, detailed guidance on calculating and reporting “Div296 earnings,” and rules for proportionally allocating these earnings to individual superannuation interests within the fund.

The method for determining TSB values remains subject to further change but will mostly follow the valuation methodology in the Family Law (Superannuation) Regulations 2025.

Resources

[Treasury Laws Amendment \(Building a Stronger and Fairer Super System\) Bill 2026](#) (Legislature, February 11, 2026) and [the Superannuation \(Building a Stronger and Fairer Super System\) Imposition Bill 2026](#) (Legislature, February 11, 2026)

Australia (new)	
Status	 Proposal
Development	<p>Wealth</p> <p>Low Income Superannuation Tax Offset amendments bill introduced</p> <p>The government's amendments to increase the payment amount and eligibility threshold for the Low Income Superannuation Tax Offset (LISTO), announced last October, have now been introduced into Parliament as part of the Treasury Laws Amendment (Building a Stronger and Fairer Super System) Bill 2026. If passed, these changes would take effect from the 2027-28 income year onward.</p> <p>Unlike the October announcements, which had proposed fixed maximum offset and income threshold amounts for LISTO, the bill introduces a formula-based rule to determine the maximum LISTO entitlement and income threshold. Under this formula, the maximum income threshold would set at the first threshold above the tax-free threshold (currently AU\$45,000). The maximum offset amount would be equal to contributions tax payable on Super Guarantee entitlements at this income level (currently AU\$810). This means that individuals with income of AU\$45,000 or less would receive a rebate on Super Guarantee contributions tax. This formula would mean that any changes to tax brackets would automatically adjust the LISTO maximum offset and income threshold.</p> <p>This change is to ensure that Super Guarantee payments are concessional taxed compared to personal income. Specifically, individuals within the 16% marginal tax bracket would not pay contributions tax on Super Guarantee entitlements (effectively providing a tax concession compared to their personal income tax rate).</p>
Resources	<p>Treasury Laws Amendment (Building a Stronger and Fairer Super System) Bill 2026 (Legislature, February 11, 2026)</p>

Australia (new)**Status**  **Proposal****Development****Wealth****Proposals to enhance oversight and governance of managed investment schemes issued**

In response to the collapse of the Shield Master Fund and the First Guardian Master Fund, the Treasury issued proposals focused on enhancing the oversight and governance of managed investment schemes. A brief consultation period closed on February 27, 2026. The proposed reforms aim to:

- Enhance the management and operation of investment schemes.
- Improve regulatory oversight of these schemes, including more effective monitoring by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) of superannuation switching.

The Treasury sought input on two options that would allow ASIC to monitor superannuation switching: 1. The introduction of a mandatory alert system for superannuation trustees, and 2. The expansion of periodic data reporting requirements by trustees to enable better detection of high-risk switching behavior.

Resources[Enhancing oversight and governance of managed investment schemes](#) (The Treasury, February 9, 2026)**Australia (new)****Status**  **Consultation is open until March 13, 2026****Development****Wealth****Sustainable investment product labelling proposed**

The Treasury issued a consultation on a proposed regime to label sustainable financial products, including those within superannuation. The consultation remains open until March 13, 2026.

The consultation is meant to help the government develop a framework that regulates the claims product issuers make about the sustainability of their investment products. The proposals serve as a foundation for this framework and aim to gather feedback on key aspects such as which products qualify for the regime, what disclosures should be provided to consumers, and the evidence product issuers would have to supply to support their sustainability claims.

This consultation follows a previous public consultation in July and August 2025 that found general stakeholder support for rules governing the use of sustainability-related terms and agreement that the labelling regime should only apply to financial products making sustainability claims. The current consultation expands on this by starting to design the detailed structure of the labelling requirements.

Resources[Sustainable investment product labelling — policy design](#) (The Treasury, February 12, 2026)**Australia (previously covered)****Development****Wealth**

- [Superannuation, Medicare implications of 2025/26 federal budget highlights](#) — key date: July 1, 2026
- [Superannuation service standards for claims handling released](#) — key date: July 1, 2026

China (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	Health Trial version of National Long-Term Care Insurance Catalog issued China's National Healthcare Security Administration issued a trial version of the National Long-term Care Insurance Service Project Catalog, effective September 25, 2025. Highlights include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This catalog defines the scope of long-term care services covered by the national insurance framework. It is meant to standardize service items and improve care quality for eligible individuals.• The policy outlines the types of long-term care services included, eligibility criteria, and reimbursement arrangements to ensure effective implementation, and fund security. It serves as a key guideline for local healthcare and insurance agencies to manage and deliver long-term care insurance services consistently across regions.
Resources	Catalog (Chinese) (National Healthcare Security Administration, September 25, 2025)
China (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	Health New drug catalog and health insurance guidelines published A new national drug catalog was issued for all regions on January 1, 2026. Highlights include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drugs removed from the new catalog have a six-month transition period during which prescriptions can continue. The medical insurance fund will maintain prescription payments at the original rate until the end of June 2026.• A unified national medical insurance payment standard applies to negotiated drugs, and addresses costs shared by the insurance fund and insured individuals. Local medical insurance authorities will set the copayment ratios.• Medical insurance departments are encouraged to build a multi-tiered medical security system. This includes supporting inclusive commercial health insurance and integrating their innovative drug catalogs into these systems.• Regions are also encouraged to explore "one-stop" settlement solutions that combine medical insurance, work injury insurance, and commercial insurance where feasible.
Resources	Catalog (Chinese) (National Healthcare Security Administration, December 7, 2025)

China — Shanghai (new)**Status**  **Currently effective****Development****Health****Measures related to floating work injury premium rates introduced**

Shanghai introduced measures to improve the work injury insurance premium rate adjustment mechanism, leverage the economic role of these rates, and promote work injury prevention and rehabilitation. The measures took effect on January 1, 2026, and remain valid through December 31, 2030. Highlights include:

- The measures apply to employers within the administrative region of Shanghai who participate in work injury insurance.
- The floating premium rate refers to the proportion of work injury insurance premiums that an employer pays in the current year, determined by the social insurance agency, and based on various factors (such as the employer's work injury insurance expenditure-to-contribution rate and work-related accident incidence rate in the previous year after the employer has paid the work injury insurance premiums according to the industry benchmark rate). For employers belonging to Category I industries, the contribution rate is divided into three tiers and can fluctuate to 120% or 150% of the industry benchmark rate of 0.2%. For employers belonging to Categories II to VIII industries, the contribution rate is divided into five tiers for each category.
- Employers with a good safety record will benefit from reduced rates. Certain expenses paid by the work injury insurance fund are excluded from the assessment of an employer's work injury insurance contribution rate.
- The social insurance agency determines the floating premium rate annually, and it is adjusted when the employer's contribution base is determined.

Resources

[Law](#) (Chinese) (Shanghai Municipal Human Resources and Social Security Bureau, January 21, 2026)

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

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

Hong Kong (new)**Status****Effective May 1, 2026****Development****Career****Minimum wage to increase**


On May 1, 2026, the minimum wage will increase to HK\$43.10/hour, up from HK\$42.10/hour.

Resources

[Chief executive in Council adopts recommendation on statutory minimum wage rate](#) (Government, February 10, 2026)

India (new)

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Status	 Currently effective
Development	Career — Health — Wealth Explanatory handbook on new labour codes issued On November 21, 2025, the Government of India officially implemented four new consolidated labor codes, which replace 29 existing central labor laws. To support employers, the government released a “Compliance Handbook for Employers under Four Labour Codes.” This handbook applies to establishments governed by the Central Government and is designed to raise employer awareness by providing an overview of each labor code along with key compliance requirements. Additional detailed compliance guidance will be issued separately for each of the four codes. The labor codes, originally enacted in 2019 and 2020, aim to simplify labor regulations, enhance worker protections, and promote workforce formalization. While some provisions took effect immediately upon implementation, others will become enforceable only after the central and state governments issue detailed rules.
Resources	Compliance handbook for employers under the four labour codes (Central Government Sphere) (Government)
India (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	Career — Health — Wealth <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Labor codes implemented — Partially effective, but rules need to be issued for some measures
Indonesia (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	Career <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Details of public housing savings program, contributions and registration issued — key date: May 20, 2027 Health <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New insurance regulation for health insurance products issued — key date: Delayed from January 1, 2026

Japan (new)**Status**  **Effective April 1, 2026****Development****Career****New gender reporting disclosures required**

On April 1, 2026, companies in Japan with more than 100 employees will face new gender reporting requirements. The new disclosures build on measures introduced by the 2015 Act on the Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace. Currently, employers must disclose several statistics from two different categories. Japan has the third highest gender pay gap (20.7%) in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

In addition to their current disclosure requirements, including gender pay gap, companies with more than 300 employees will have to disclose the ratio of female managers. Companies with more than 100 employees will have to disclose the ratio of female managers and their gender pay gap.

Companies with fewer than 100 employees are not required to make any disclosures.

Resources

[Information on the disclosures](#) (Japanese) (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)

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

- [Pension tax reforms introduced](#) — April 1, 2026

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

- [Expatriate permit changes to boost local employment rate introduced](#) — key date: June 1, 2026

Career — Health

- [Employment protections for gig workers finalized](#) — Expected in March 2026

Health — Wealth

- [Expanded social security coverage \(LINDUNG 24/7 Scheme\) to be introduced](#) — key date: Mid 2026

New Zealand (new)

Status



Currently effective

Development

Career

Employment relations framework modernized

Key changes to modernize New Zealand's employment relations system are included in the Employment Relations Amendment Act that received Royal Assent and took effect on February 21, 2026. Highlights include:

- Clearer employee classification standards. A new "gateway test" is now required to determine if a worker is classified as a contractor or an employee.
- New salary threshold for unjustified dismissal claims. Employees earning NZ\$200,000 or more annually can no longer file personal grievance claims for unjustified dismissal, but there is a 12-month transition period before the threshold applies. Employers and employees may agree in writing to retain dismissal protections.
- Removal of the requirement for new employees to be subject to a collective agreement for the first 30 days. New employees can choose to enter into an individual employment agreement immediately or join a collective agreement. However, employers must provide new hires with information about the collective agreement and the relevant union.
- Reduced remedies for employee misconduct. When an employee's misconduct contributes to a personal grievance, the remedies may be reduced, even if there are procedural errors.

Resources

[Employment Relations Amendment Act](#) (Legislature, February 21, 2026)

Singapore (new)

Status



Effective January 1, 2027 for new applications and January 1, 2028 for renewal applications

Development

Career

Minimum salary requirements for foreign work passes to increase

Singapore's Budget for 2026 includes revised qualifying salaries for Employment Pass and S Pass holders, which will take effect on January 1, 2027, for new applications, and from January 1, 2028, for renewal applications. The Employment Pass is required for foreign professionals, managers, executives and technicians, and the S Pass is for skilled foreign workers. The increased qualifying salaries will be:

Employment Pass:

The minimum qualifying salary will increase to SG\$6,000/month, up from SG\$5,600/month. It increases progressively from age 23, up to SG\$11,500/month for applicants aged 45 and older (currently SG\$10,700/month).

The minimum qualifying salary for roles in the financial sector will increase to SG\$6,600/month, up from SG\$6,200/month — it increases progressively from age 23, up to SG\$12,700/month for applicants aged 45 or older (currently, SG\$11,800/month).

S Pass:

The minimum qualifying salary will increase to SG\$3,600/month, up from SG\$3,300/month — it increases progressively from age 23, up to SG\$5,100/month for applicants aged 45 and older.

The minimum qualifying salary for roles in the financial services sector will increase to SG\$4,000/month, up from SG\$3,800/month. It increases progressively from age 23, up to SG\$5,650/month for applicants aged 45 and older.

Resources

[Budget 2026](#) (Government, February 2026)

Singapore (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)


Development

Career

- [The Workplace Fairness \(Dispute Resolution\) Bill passed](#) — key date: End of 2027

Career — Wealth

- [Retirement and reemployment ages to increase](#) — key date: July 1, 2026

South Korea (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Supreme Court ruling confirms management performance pay is not considered wages for severance pay calculation</p> <p>The Supreme Court upheld a lower court ruling that a company’s management performance pay (including productivity incentives and profit sharing) does not qualify as “ordinary wages” and is therefore excluded from the “average wage” used to calculate severance pay. Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Productivity incentives are based on production targets and sales prices, while profit sharing is not fixed and is distributed according to operating profit.• The company was not obligated to pay these incentives under employment rules or collective agreements, as payment standards were not set and were discretionary.• Labor-management agreements on incentives were restricted to each year and could be rejected by the company; notably, no incentives were paid in certain years (e.g., 2001 and 2009), due to lack of agreement. <p>This ruling contrasts with a recent Supreme Court ruling where Target Achievement Incentives directly linked to work performance were recognized as wages, unlike overall performance incentives.</p>
Resources	Decision (Korean) (Supreme Court of Korea)

South Korea (previously covered, soon to be effective)

Status  **Effective March 10, 2026.**

Development

Career

Implementation plans, effective date for labor relations law announced

The government announced that the “Yellow Envelope Act” will take effect on March 10, 2026. To support its implementation, the government established a task force to develop detailed guidelines covering key issues such as the definition of “employer,” bargaining procedures and the scope of labour disputes. The Ministry of Employment and Labour is expected to release these guidelines by the end of 2025.

Passed by parliament in August 2025, the Act amends important provisions of the Trade Unions and Labour Relations Adjustment Act and aims to strengthen the rights of organised labour and will affect employers across all industry sectors.


Highlights of the Act include:

- The definition of “employer” was expanded to include those who can substantially and specifically control workers’ conditions, even if they are not directly party to the employment contract. As a result, companies that use subcontractors could now qualify as employers of a subcontractor’s workforce and could be required to engage in collective bargaining with subcontractors’ unions.
- Broader eligibility for union membership, including permission for former employees to join labor unions.
- Employer claims for damages against unions and individual workers are limited and immunity for union actions was expanded.
- Unions have broader grounds to initiate disputes, including management decisions impacting working conditions, collective bargaining agreements, and worker status.

Resources

miyoung.kim@mercer.com

[Legislation](#) (Korean) (Government, September 9, 2025) and [Task force](#) (Korean) (Government)

Taiwan (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Visa and immigration rules for certain foreign workers eased</p> <p>From January 1, 2026, changes in Taiwan’s Act for the Recruitment and Employment of Foreign Professionals, aim to ease the work permit requirements and improve the social protections of certain foreign nationals. Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduates of the world’s top 1,000 (up from 500) universities are exempt from the requirement for two years of work experience prior to applying for a work permit. • Graduates with a minimum of a bachelor’s degree from the top 200 universities worldwide can now apply to the Ministry of Labor for a work permit (valid for up to two years) without employer sponsorship. • Digital nomad visas are available to nationals from visa-exempt countries. The visas are valid for an initial six months (up from three) and capped at two years (up from six months). • Spouses of foreign professionals and foreign specialist professionals can now apply directly to the Ministry of Labour for a work permit — previously, employer sponsorship was necessary. • Foreigners who recently graduated from a Taiwan university can now remain for up to two years after graduation without a work permit because the period spent studying now counts towards fulfilling residency requirements. • Foreign professionals with permanent residency are now eligible for employment insurance, including unemployment benefits, vocational training allowances, and parental leave pay. • Foreign professionals no longer need permanent residency to join Taiwan’s labor pension system (Labor Pension Act). However, employees hired before January 1, 2026, and who are still employed with the same employer, can submit a written request to their employer by June 30, 2026, to remain covered by the old pension system (Labor Standards Act).
Resources	Act for the Recruitment and Employment of Foreign Professionals (Legislature September 24, 2025)
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>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start date of Employee Welfare Fund postponed — key date: October 1, 2026

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Vietnam (new)

Status



Effective July 1, 2026

Development

Career — Health

Maternity, paternity leaves to increase

Vietnam will increase the period of maternity and paternity on July 1, 2026, under measures included in the Law on Population. Women who have a second child will be entitled to seven months of leave (up from six months), and male employees will be entitled to paternity leave of 10 working days (up from five days).

Resources

[Law on Population](#) (Vietnamese) (Government, December 10, 2025)

Section 5

Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA)

European Union (EU) (new)	
Status	 Member States have 12 months from the date of entry into force of the Directive to transpose amendments to the CSRD into national law and until July 26, 2028, to transpose the CSDDD.
Development	Career Sustainability reporting and due diligence simplification measures agreed upon The Council of the European Union (EU) approved simplified sustainability reporting and due diligence requirements included in the Omnibus I Simplification Package directive (Directive). This directive is meant to reduce the reporting burden for companies subject to the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD). Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive The CSRD now applies only to companies with more than 1,000 employees and annual net turnover exceeding €450 million. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The CSRD now applies to ultimate non-EU parent companies that have generated over €450 million in net turnover within the EU in each of the last two consecutive financial years and have an EU subsidiary or branch with over €200 million in net turnover in the preceding financial year.• “Wave one” companies, which began reporting in the 2024 financial year, may be exempt from reporting requirements for financial years starting between January 1, 2025, and December 31, 2026, depending on member state laws.• Final adoption of simplified European Sustainability Reporting Standards that eliminate all voluntary disclosures and reduce data points by 61% is expected in 2026.

European Union (EU) (new) (continued)

Development (continued)

Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive

- The scope of the CSDDD is now narrowed to companies with more than 5,000 employees (previously 1,000) and a net turnover exceeding €1.5 billion (previously €450 million).
- Companies may focus their due diligence on parts of their value chains where actual or potential adverse impacts are most likely, based on reasonably available information.
- Elimination of the potential review of the CSDDD's current exclusion of regulated financial undertakings from its scope.
- Removal of the requirement to end business relationships with direct partners.
- Removal of the EU harmonized liability regime, which would have allowed victims to seek judicial remedies.
- Penalties for breaches of the directive are capped at 3% of the company's net worldwide turnover.

Companies must comply with the CSDDD from July 26, 2029. The first CSDDD reports will cover financial years starting on or after January 1, 2030.

Resources

[Council signs off simplification of sustainability reporting and due diligence requirements to boost EU competitiveness](#) (European Council, February 24, 2026) and [EU finalizes corporate sustainability, human rights due diligence directive](#) (Mercer, July 9, 2024)

EU (previously covered, with upcoming effective dates)

Development

Career

- [Law approved to improve gender balance on company boards](#) — key date: June 30, 2026
- [Ban on forced or child labor finalized](#) — key date: December 14, 2027
- [Revised European Works Council Directive approved](#) — key date: National transposition by January 1, 2028; new rules applicable from January 2, 2029.

Career — Health

- [Platform Worker's Directive moves forward](#) — key date: December 2, 2026

Career — Health — Wealth

- [Pay transparency law must be transposed into national law](#) — key date: June 7, 2026

Belgium (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career — Health</p> <p>Bereavement leave expanded</p> <p>On December. 18, 2025, a sectoral agreement was reached in Belgium within Joint Committee No. 200 that includes expanded bereavement leave. As of January 1, 2026, employees are entitled to 12 days on the death of a partner or child (up from 10 days), and to five days on the death of a parent or parents-in-law (up from three days). New sectoral agreements should now incorporate these measures.</p>
Resources	Sectoral agreement (Dutch and French) (Government, January 15, 2026)
Belgium (new)	
Status	 Partially effective
Development	<p>Career — Health</p> <p>Transportation benefits increased</p> <p>On December 18, 2025, a sectoral agreement was reached in Belgium within Joint Committee No. 200 that includes the following changes to transportation benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On February 1, 2026, the employer’s contribution to employees’ train tickets increased to 100% of the cost of a second-class ticket. • On October 1, 2026, the bicycle allowance will increase to €0.32/kilometer, capped at € 12.80/day. <p>New sectoral agreements should now incorporate these measures.</p>
Resources	Sectoral agreement (French) (Government, January 15, 2026)
Belgium (new)	
Status	 Proposal
Development	<p>Health</p> <p>Tax reforms include cap on benefits-in-kind value</p> <p>In December 2025, the Belgian government submitted a draft bill to parliament proposing tax reforms that would simplify personal taxation, and which include the abolition of various exemptions and reductions. A key measure would introduce a 20% cap on certain lump-sum benefits-in-kind, calculated on an employee’s total gross remuneration. Any amount exceeding this cap would incur a 7.5% specific contribution.</p> <p>The cap applies to benefits currently taxed on a lump-sum basis, including company cars; stock options taxable at grant under stock option legislation; employer-provided free housing; free heating and electricity; and the private use of laptops, phones, internet, or tablets. Benefits valued and taxed based on their actual cost, as well as certain social benefits, are excluded from this proposal.</p>
Resources	Draft bill (Dutch) (Government, December 18, 2025)

Belgium (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development	<p>Career</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility Budget required for certain employers starting in 2027 — key date: January 1, 2027 <p>Career — Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer deal includes employment measures — key date: Implementing legislation must be agreed to, and clarification is still required for some measures <p>Wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue- and white-collar pension harmonization postponed — key date: January 1, 2027 • Federal government agrees on pension reforms — key date: January 1, 2028
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France (previously covered, partially effective)

Status	 Partially effective
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Gender quotas for senior executives, management teams imposed</p> <p>Under a 2021 law intended to accelerate economic and professional equality, companies with more than 1,000 employees will have to meet 30% and then 40% quotas for more equal gender representation among senior executives and management committee members. From March 1, 2026, companies will have two years to ensure that women hold 30% or more of senior executive roles and management committee seats and to negotiate corrective measures or implement measures in the absence of an agreement. From March 1, 2029, companies will have two years to comply with the 40% quota, and sanctions for noncompliance (up to 1% of the company's payroll) will take effect from March 1, 2031. From March 1, 2026, companies will have two years to ensure that women hold 30% or more of senior executive roles and management committee seats and to negotiate corrective measures or implement measures in the absence of an agreement.</p>
Resources	<p>ayce.nisancioglu@mercer.com</p> <p>GRIST, January 21, 2022</p>

France (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)



Development	<p>Career — Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New paid birth leave to be introduced — key date: July 1, 2026
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Germany (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)


Development	<p>Wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate tax reductions that will impact company pension schemes introduced — key date: January 1, 202
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Greece (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development	<p>Career — Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor law changes introduced — Effective dates vary
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Ireland (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Career — Wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enforcement of contractual retirement ages to be generally restricted — key date: Effective once a ministerial order is issued
Isle of Man (new)	
Status	<p> Effective April 1, 2026</p>
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Minimum wage to increase</p> <p>On April 1, 2026, the minimum wage will increase to £12.86 /hour, up from £12.25/hour. The youth hourly minimum wage (paid to individuals who have left school but are not yet 18) will increase to £10.16/hour, up from £9.55/hour. Previously, the government proposed a higher minimum wage.</p>
Resources	<p>Tynwald approve new minimum wage rate in the Isle of Man (Government, February 18, 2026) and Minimum wage (young workers) (No. 2 regulations 2025) (Government, Feb. 19, 2025)</p>
Italy (new)	
Status	<p> Currently effective</p>
Development	<p>Career — Health</p> <p>Flexibility of parental leave entitlement increased</p> <p>From January 1, 2026, employees in Italy can take parental leave up until their child is age 14 (up from 12 years) under INPS message No. 251/2026.</p> <p>The leave can be used by mothers after the end of maternity leave, and by fathers following the child's birth. Parents who foster or adopt a child can take parental leave up to 14 years after the child's placement with the family (or until the child reaches majority age, whichever is sooner).</p> <p>Other aspects of parental leave entitlement are unchanged (such as, the maximum duration and division of leave between parents and payment).</p>
Resources	<p>INPS message No. 251/2026 (Italian) (Legislature, December 30, 2025)</p>

Italy (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Termination Indemnity rules revised to increase employees' pension participation — key date: July 1, 2026
Jersey, Channel Islands (new)	
Status	<p> Effective April 1, 2026</p>
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Minimum wage to increase</p> <p>The government announced a new minimum wage rate of £13.59/hour (up from £13/hour), starting on April 1, 2026.</p>
Resources	<p>Employment (minimum wage) (Jersey) Amendment Order 2026 (Government, February 13, 2026)</p>
Mauritius (new)	
Status	<p> Currently effective</p>
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Minimum wage increased</p> <p>On January 1, 2026, the minimum wage increased to 17,745 MUR/month, up from 17,110 MUR/month.</p>
Resources	<p>National minimum wage (amendment) regulations 2026 (Supreme Court, January 17, 2026)</p>
Morocco (new)	
Status	<p> Currently effective</p>
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Tax increased on workers' compensation on insurance products, services</p> <p>On January 1, 2026, the workers' compensation tax on insurance products and services increased to 20%, up from 18%.</p>
Resources	<p>Announcement (French) (Government, January 7, 2026)</p>
Netherlands (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant reforms to the occupational pension system — key date: Unknown • Lump-sum Revision Act start date postponed again — key date: Postponed until July 1, 2026 • Deadline extended for transition to new pension system — key date: Deadline extended to January 1, 2028

Oman (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	Career <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social protection for foreign employees expanded — key date: July 2026 Health — Wealth <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three workforce insurance schemes postponed — key date: July 19, 2026
Poland (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	Career — Health <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Method for determining length of service expanded — key date: May 1, 2026
Portugal (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	Career Partial tax exemption scheme for bonus payments introduced <p>Portugal's 2025 budget introduced a partial exemption from personal income tax and social security contributions on certain employee bonuses, subject to specific conditions. Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The exemption applies specifically to voluntary, non-regular productivity and performance bonuses, profit-sharing, and balance-sheet bonuses, subject to compliance with defined legal conditions. Eligible bonus payments must be voluntary and non-regular (not part of a contractual obligation) and must comply with additional tax rules.• The total exempt amount is capped at 6% calculated on the employee's basic annual salary, which includes the 13th and 14th month salaries, and mandatory holiday and Christmas bonuses.• Employers must implement a qualifying salary increase in the same year to qualify for the exemption, with specific tax rules governing its calculation. The percentage may vary annually (for example 4.5% in 2025, subject to change).• Employers are required to withhold income tax on all bonuses at the time of payment and must report these payments using specific codes in the monthly remuneration statement, per Tax Authority guidance.
Resources	2025 budget (Portuguese) (Government); Ordinance (Portuguese) (Tax Authority, September 1, 2025) and Guidance (Portuguese) (Tax Authority, October 21, 2025)

Romania (new)

Status



Starting January 5, 2027

Development

Wealth

Private pension framework from 2027 revised

Starting January 5, 2027, Romania will implement changes to better align the payment mechanisms for private pensions with international standards. Law 2/2026 on the Payment of Private Pensions was published in the Official Gazette on Jan. 5, 2026, and additional legislation will follow to enable the law's application.

Romania's private pension system consists of three types, or "pillars," of pension funds, alongside the state-managed public pension fund. The reforms aim to support Romania's application to join the OECD and to address demographic pressures.

Key points of the law include:

- Establishment of a regulatory framework for pension payments and introduction of principles to promote sustainable pension payouts, proportional payment methods and protection of property and inheritance rights.
- Creation of a framework for the payment phase of the private pension system, which under the Financial Supervisory Authority (FSA) covers the authorization, organization, operation, supervision, and control of private pension managers, payout funds, custodians, auditors, marketing agents, and the Guarantee Fund).
- Private pension payments will be based on two types of funds authorized by the FSA and managed by private pension providers: programmed withdrawal payout funds and lifetime annuity payout funds.
- Upon retirement, individuals will no longer be allowed to withdraw their entire pension savings as a lump sum. Instead, they will be allowed to withdraw up to 30% of their total accumulated pension savings immediately, with the remaining 70% paid out in instalments over approximately eight years. Currently, eligible individuals can receive their benefits either as a lump sum or in instalments over a maximum of five years.

Resources

alina.popescu@mercermarshbenefits.com

[Law 2/2026 on the Payment of Private Pensions](#) (Romanian) (Legislature, January 5, 2026)


Slovenia (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development


Career — Wealth

- [Pension reforms will increase retirement age](#) — key date: Beginning in 2028
- [Phased retirement introduced, hiring of older employees boosted](#) — key date: Upon proclamation

South Africa (new)

Status	 Currently effective
Development	Health — Wealth Law changed to allow enforcement of employers' timely contributions to benefit funds Labor inspectors can now enforce the requirement that employers pay deducted employee contributions to benefit funds within seven days after the Minister of Employment and Labour recently withdrew a 2003 exemption, making Section 34A of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) fully applicable to benefit funds governed by the Pension Funds Act. Inspectors are authorized to verify payments, request proof and contribution schedules, and take enforcement action for noncompliance. This closes a two-decade enforcement gap, strengthening protections for employees by ensuring timely transfer of retirement, medical aid, and other benefit fund contributions.
Resources	susana.dasilva@mercer.com Employment and labour on closing compliance gaps and expanding worker protections across key sectors (Government, January 22, 2026)

South Africa (new)

Status	 Currently effective
Development	Career Minimum wage increased On March 1, 2026, the minimum wage for all workers increased to 30.23 ZAR/hour, up from 28.79 ZAR/hour. The 2026 minimum wage adjustment concludes the National Wage Commission's (NWC) current medium-term framework that guarantees above-inflation increases. After 2026, the NWC may introduce a new methodology more closely aligned to average or median wages in the economy.
Resources	National minimum wage to rise to R30.23 per hour from March (Government, February 4, 2026)

South Africa (new)

Status



Consultation is open until March 30, 2026

Development

Career

Labor law changes proposed

South Africa's Minister of Employment and Labour opened a consultation on proposed amendments to the Labour Law Amendment Bill, 2025, which seeks to update key employment laws including the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997 (BCEA); the Employment Equity Act, 1998 (EEA); the Labour Relations Act, 1995 (LRA); the National Minimum Wage Act, 2018 (NMWA); and the Unemployment Insurance Act, 2001 (UIA).

The proposals, which follow extended negotiations in the National Economic Development and Labour Council, would enhance worker protections —expanded parental leave, strengthened collective bargaining, clarified minimum wage definitions, and improved dispute resolution. This consultation invites public input through March 30, 2026. Highlights include:

BCEA

- Expands protections for on-call workers and redesigns parental leave to cover parents of newborn, adopted, and surrogate children.
- Increases severance pay gradually and strengthens enforcement and dispute resolution processes.

EEA

- Allows the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation, and Arbitration to handle more harassment-related discrimination cases through arbitration.
- Simplifies referrals to bargaining councils and reduces duplicate employment equity compliance checks for employers.

LRA

- Strengthens collective bargaining and offers temporary relief from bargaining council rules for small or new businesses.
- Clarifies when essential service employees can strike legally, updates retrenchment procedures, and limits unfair dismissal protections during the first three months of employment or the probation period.

NMWA

- Clarifies that deferred payments (like retirement fund contributions) are excluded from minimum wage calculations.
- Updates the composition and governance of the National Minimum Wage Commission.

Resources

[Labour law amendment bill: Draft: Comments invited](#) (Government, February 26, 2026)

South Africa (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development

Career

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

Spain (new)

Status



Currently effective

Development

Career

Minimum interprofessional salary increased

The minimum interprofessional salary (SMI) has increased to €1,221/month, paid in 14 payments (up from €1,184/month) and is retroactively applied to January 1, 2026. The daily rate is €40.70. The daily rate for workers on fixed-term contracts, and whose employment with the same company does not exceed 120 days, increased to €57.82 euros, up from €56.08.

Resources

[Decree 126/2026](#) (Spanish) (Official Bulletin, February 19, 2026)

Sweden (new)

Status



Currently effective

Development

Career — Health

Temporary parental benefit scope expanded

Starting January 1, 2026, Sweden broadened the temporary parental benefit (VAB) to better support parents of children needing extra care. Parents can now take paid leave not only when their child is sick but also to:

- Attend meetings at the child's school or preschool to train staff on the child's special needs
- Participate in school meetings related to the child's illness or disability
- Take part in social services' assessments or investigations regarding the child's need for protection or support.

Resources

[Information on temporary parental benefit](#) (Swedish) (Government, February 17, 2026)

United Arab Emirates (new)

Status



Currently effective

Development

Career

Minimum salary for Emirati nationals increased

Starting January 1, 2026, private sector employers in the United Arab Emirates must pay Emirati nationals a minimum monthly salary of 6,000 AED. The measure supports the UAE's Emiratisation objectives by promoting greater Emirati participation and retention in the private sector and aligning salary levels with prevailing market conditions. By June 30, 2026, employers must have revised employment contracts and updated payroll systems to reflect the new salary requirements. Noncompliance beyond this deadline will incur penalties, including the suspension of the issuance of new work permits.

Resources

[News](#) (Ministry of Human Resources & Emiratisation, December 31, 2025)

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United Kingdom (UK) (new)	
Status	 Proposal
Development	<p>Wealth</p> <p>Draft legislation in response to <i>Virgin Media</i> legal decision issued</p> <p>In June 2023, a High Court decision in the case of <i>Virgin Media Limited vs NTL Pension Trustees II Limited</i> and others held that certain rule alterations made to defined benefit pension schemes that were contracted-out on a “Reference Scheme Test” basis between April 6, 1997, and April 5, 2016 (inclusive) were void if the trustees had not informed the scheme actuary and obtained a written “Section 37” actuarial confirmation. In June 2024, a High Court Judge upheld the decision following an appeal.</p> <p>Draft legislation in the Pension Schemes Bill (expected to be enacted in spring 2026) is intended to give trustees the ability to seek a retrospective confirmation from their current scheme actuary that an alteration would not have prevented the scheme from continuing to satisfy the Reference Scheme Test. If the Bill is enacted in its current form, and the scheme actuary can provide such a confirmation, the alteration will be treated as having always been valid.</p>
Resources	<p>richard.wyatt@mercer.com</p> <p>Pension Schemes Bill (Legislature, February 24, 2026); Retrospective actuarial confirmation of benefit changes (DWP, June 5, 2025); and FRC issues guidance to support actuaries dealing with historic amendments to pension rules (Financial Reporting Council, January 23, 2026)</p>

UK — Great Britain (updated)

Status



Effective April 6, 2026

Development

Career — Health

Employment Rights Act 2025: Measures taking effect in April 2026

Several provisions of the Employment Rights Act 2025 (ERA) will come into force on April 6, 2026:

- *Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)*: From April 6, 2026, SSP will be payable from the first day of illness, replacing the current four-day waiting period. The lower earnings limit, which previously set the minimum earnings required to qualify for SSP, will be removed. This change will benefit workers with fewer hours, apprentices, young workers earning below the national minimum wage, and lower-paid casual employees. The weekly SSP rate will be the lesser of the prescribed weekly rate or 80% of the employee's normal weekly earnings, ensuring SSP does not exceed actual earnings for lower-paid workers. This measure will also apply in Northern Ireland, although the ERA generally covers only Great Britain.
- *Gender pay gap and menopause action plans*: Employers may voluntarily publish plans to reduce their gender pay gap and support for employees experiencing menopause symptoms, with government guidance forthcoming. From April 2027, these plans will be mandatory for large employers.
- *Paternity Leave and Ordinary Parental Leave*: Both paternity leave and unpaid parental leave will become day-one employment rights, removing the current service requirements of 26 weeks for paternity leave and one year for parental leave. Additionally, the restriction preventing paternity leave after shared parental leave will be lifted.
- *Collective Redundancy Protective Award*: The maximum protective award for failure to comply with collective redundancy consultation requirements will double to 180 days of gross pay per affected worker, up from 90 days.
- *Whistleblowing*: Reports of sexual harassment will be explicitly protected as qualifying disclosures under whistleblowing legislation.
- *Trade union recognition*: The process for trade union recognition will be simplified, and the procedural requirements for unions to gain recognition will be eased. However, the planned introduction of electronic and workplace balloting, originally scheduled for April, has been postponed to later in 2026 and 2027.
- *Fair Work Agency*: Effective April 7, 2026, the Fair Work Agency will assume responsibility for enforcing various employment rights, including holiday pay and SSP.

Additionally, certain ERA measures simplifying trade union organization of industrial action and enhancing protections for participating employees took effect on February 18, 2026. Other ERA measures will be introduced later in 2026 and 2027.

Resources

[Employment Rights Acts 2025](#) (Legislature, December 18, 2025)

UK — Great Britain (updated)

Status



Effective April 6, 2026

Development

Career — Health

Bereaved partner's paternity leave updated

From April 6, 2026, changes to The Paternity Leave (Bereavement) Act 2024 will take effect following measures introduced by the Employment Rights Act 2025.

The 2024 Act — which took effect on December 29, 2025 — gave fathers a “day one” right to two weeks of paternity leave if their partner had died, without the six months of continuous service requirement. From April 2026, this leave — Bereaved Partners Paternity Leave (BPPL) — will be expanded to include other situations, allowing eligible employees to take up to 52 weeks of unpaid leave. BPPL will be allowed where the child's mother or primary adopter dies before the child's first birthday or the first anniversary of the child's adoption placement, even if the father or partner has already taken shared parental leave.

The government's recently published draft regulations include the following changes:

- Expanded BPPL will apply where the child's mother or the primary adopter dies on or after April 6, 2026.
- Bereaved partners with primary responsibility for the child's upbringing will be allowed up to one period of 52 weeks of BPPL if the child's mother or primary adopter dies before the respective dates.
- If the child also dies, or if an adopted child is returned to the adoption agency after the primary adopter's death, the bereaved partner can remain on BPPL for up to eight weeks.
- If the bereavement occurs fewer than 14 days before the respective dates, the employee can take up to 14 days of BPPL. Similar rights are extended to parents in surrogacy cases.
- Notification rules vary depending on the bereavement date. However, employees can notify from February 18, 2026, for BPPL starting on April 6, 2026.

Resources

[The Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave Regulations 2026](#) (Government) and [Employment Rights Act 2025](#) (Legislature, December 18, 2025)

UK — Great Britain (updated)

Status



Effective April 6, 2026

Development

Career — Health

New paternity, parental leave entitlements to take effect

Measures in the Employment Rights Act 2025 (ERA) will make paternity and unpaid parental leave “day one” rights from April 6, 2026, under draft regulations laid before parliament on January 12, 2026. Currently, employees must have 26 weeks of minimum service to take paternity leave and one year of service to take parental leave.

Highlights include:

- The expanded leave will apply to children born on or after April 6, 2026 (or with an expected week of childbirth (EWC) starting on or after April 5, 2026, for children who are born early and to children placed for adoption on or after April 6, 2026 (or who enter Great Britain on or after that date for overseas adoptions).
- Transitional provisions will allow employees who intend to use their entitlement from April 6, 2026, to notify their intention from February 18, 2026.
- The notification requirements for paternity leave are unchanged. However, if the EWC falls between April 5 and July 25, 2026, transitional provisions will temporarily reduce the required notification period to 28 days.
- The prohibition on taking paternity leave if shared parental leave has already been taken is removed.

The duration of paternity and parental leaves is unchanged (respectively, up to two weeks and up to 18 weeks per child up to age 18 years). The rules for paternity pay are unchanged, and employees will still have to meet current service and earnings requirements to receive pay during their paternity leave.

Resources

[The Employment Rights Act 2025 \(Parental and Paternity Leave\) \(Removal of Qualifying Periods etc.\) \(Consequential Amendments\) Regulations 2026](#) (Government, January 12, 2026) and [Paternity pay and leave](#) (Government)

UK (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development

Career

- [Minimum wage to increase](#) — key date: April 1, 2026

Health

- [Introduction of mandatory payrolling of benefits-in-kind postponed](#) — key date: April 2027

Wealth

- [Pension auto enrollment to expand, reducing eligible age and abolishing earnings threshold](#) — key date: unknown
- [Government responds to consultation on unconnected multiemployer CDC schemes](#) — key date: July 31, 2026
- [Budget includes pension changes](#) — key date: April 6, 2027
- [Policy paper on inheritance tax and pensions death benefits](#) — key date: April 6, 2027

Career — Health

- [Implementation timeline for Employment Rights Act updated in Great Britain](#) — key date: April 6, 2026

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Mercer (US) LLC
1166 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10036
www.mercer.com

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