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February 4, 2021

NEW EXECUTIVE ORDERS REGARDING ECONOMIC RELIEF

Last week, President Biden signed two executive orders addressing COVID economic relief and federal worker protections. These executive orders direct various federal agencies to identify new ways to increase relief without new legislation.

COVID Economic Relief Executive Order

1. Asks the Department of Labor to consider clarifying that workers have a federally guaranteed right to refuse employment that will jeopardize their health and that if they do so, they will remain eligible for unemployment insurance. **(NOTE: This does not implement required changes to unemployment benefit eligibility, but requests that the DOL consider making such changes).**
2. Establish benefit delivery teams and a coordination structure across federal and state administer programs to reduce the time and burden to access support, such as Earned Income Tax Credits, small business loans, unemployment benefits, and food, housing and medical programs.
3. Asks the USDA to consider taking the following steps:
 - a) Increase assistance under the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) program of the FFCRA, which provides food dollars to low-income families to replace school meals missed due to COVID-related closures;
 - b) Increase SNAP allotments to the lowest-income households; and
 - c) Update food assistance benefits to reflect the true costs of a healthy diet.
4. Asks the Department of Treasury department to take actions to expand delivery of Economic Impact Payments to individuals who still have not received their payments.

Executive Order on Federal Workers

1. Restores collective bargaining power and worker protections by revoking three executive orders from the previous administration.
2. Eliminates Schedule F, which allowed more federal employees to be exempt from civil service protections and to be fired without cause.
3. Directs the Office of Personnel Management to develop recommendations to pay more federal employees at least \$15 per hour.

For more information, you may contact [Jenny Holt Teeter](#) or [Brianna C. Cook](#).