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California Launches \$18 Million Program Intended for Wage Theft Investigation



The California Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) and the Labor Commissioner's Office launched a program creating opportunities for local prosecutors to obtain funding for wage theft prosecutions.

The program, called the [Workers' Rights Enforcement Grant](#), will provide eligible prosecutors with two annual grant awards of \$8,550,000 each, for a total of \$18 million. The first grant cycle is 2024 – 2025, and the second is 2025 – 2026.

The DIR states that the funding will enhance the capacity of public prosecutors to take action against what it calls "wage theft." The goal is "ensuring that labor laws are enforced, violators are prosecuted, and employers are deterred from engaging in practices such as unpaid overtime and minimum wage violations." Further, the DIR stated that this program "sends a strong message to employers about the State of California's commitment to ensuring every Californian is fairly compensated for their labor."

DIR Labor Commissioner Lilia García-Brower stated "[w]e appreciate the legislature's support in creating this funding source to incentivize the prosecution of wage theft. This is a serious and persistent problem, which demands increased collaboration with government agencies and community leaders. This grant program will help further our efforts to combat wage theft and unfair competition in the workplace. We look forward to working with local prosecutors in addressing these important issues."

Employers with questions regarding the potential impact of this program should contact legal counsel.

Authors

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