



Labor Attaché Program

ILAB's labor attaché program is a key component of U.S. labor diplomacy. Through it, the department places experienced ILAB staff in strategic countries to promote effective practices to improve working conditions, job quality, and respect for workers' rights. By defending workers' fundamental rights abroad, labor attachés help safeguard them here at home.

WHAT IS A LABOR ATTACHÉ?

A labor attaché is a high-level representative of the U.S. Department of Labor based in a U.S. embassy or mission who plays a leading role in U.S. engagement on labor and employment issues overseas. The department established the labor attaché program in 2014. Today, labor attachés are posted in U.S. Embassies in five countries: Mexico, Colombia, Vietnam, Bangladesh, and Guatemala. They are also posted in U.S. Consulates in Monterrey and Tijuana in Mexico and in the U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Geneva, Switzerland, where the International Labor Organization (ILO) is headquartered.



A labor attaché visits a garment factory in Dhaka, Bangladesh.



WHAT DO LABOR ATTACHÉS DO?

Labor attachés at U.S. posts play a leading role in U.S. labor diplomacy and complement the engagement of U.S. State Department officials. They:

- work closely with international organizations, host country governments, workers and their organizations, employers and their organizations, and civil society to promote improvements in labor rights and compliance with ILO labor standards,
- monitor and support host countries' compliance with the labor provisions of trade agreements and preference programs,
- support bilateral and multilateral cooperation on labor and employment issues, including through technical cooperation that strengthens the capacity of governments to effectively enforce labor laws and workers to exercise their labor rights,
- serve as a resource to host country governments on labor and employment issues and conduct research and reporting on international labor and employment developments,
- support U.S. representation at the ILO and relevant regional and international bodies.

COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: MEXICO

In Mexico, the department's five labor attachés are focused on the implementation of the labor obligations of the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). This includes the USMCA Rapid Response Mechanism, which allows the U.S. to take enforcement action based on the labor situation at an individual factory in Mexico if such facility fails to comply with domestic freedom of association and collective bargaining laws. The attachés support the Mexican government in implementing its historic labor reforms. They work with employers, workers, and their organizations to help them understand and comply with labor laws and USMCA labor standards. Labor attachés in Mexico also play a key role in the development and implementation of more than \$180 million of technical assistance projects. These support government, worker, and employer capacity building and efforts to reduce workplace discrimination and combat child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking.



Tijuana-based labor attaché, Jason Vorderstrasse, discusses labor issues in the agriculture sector in Delicias, Chihuahua with a professor from the Universidad Autonoma de Chihuahua.

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