# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# assistant secretary for employee benefits security, Department of labor

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Health, Education, Labor and Pensions |
| Agency Mission | To foster and promote the welfare of job seekers, wage earners and retirees of the United States by improving their working conditions, advancing their opportunities for profitable employment and protecting benefits |
| Position Overview | The assistant secretary for employee benefits security heads the Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) in its mission to assure the security of the retirement, health and other workplace related benefits of America's workers and their families. |
| Compensation | Level IV $155,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5315)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Secretary of Labor |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | The EBSA educates and assists 149 million workers, retirees and their families covered by approximately 685,000 private retirement plans, 2.2 million health plans, and similar numbers of other welfare benefit plans with $9.3 trillion in assets.[[2]](#endnote-2) The EBSA had a fiscal 2016 enacted budget of $181 million and 946 full-time equivalents. The assistant secretary has a deputy assistant secretary for program operations and a deputy assistant secretary for policy, and oversees several offices, including the Office of Exemption Determinations, the Office of Enforcement, the Office of Policy and Research, the Office of Health Plan Standards and Compliance Assistance, the Office of Regulations and Interpretations, the Office of the Chief Accountant, the Office of Technology and Information Services, the Office of Outreach Education and Assistance, the Office of Program Planning Evaluation and Management and seven regional offices.[[3]](#endnote-3) |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Exercises executive leadership in protecting the pension health and other benefits of participants in employee benefits plans
* Ensures that workers get the information they need to protect their benefit rights, assists plan officials to understand the requirements of the relevant statutes in order to meet their legal responsibilities; oversees the development of policies and regulations that encourage the growth of employment-based benefits; and deters and corrects violations of the relevant statutes through voluntary compliance and civil and criminal enforcement actions
* Oversees the following functions:
	+ Administration of responsibilities under Title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) (fiduciary responsibilities)
	+ Interaction with and provision of assistance to private-sector employers, pension industry leaders and representatives, unions, participants and beneficiaries through speeches, sponsorship of meetings and conferences, and publication of research and other information compiled by EBSA
	+ Coordination with other federal agencies in developing and analyzing policies and legislation that affect the financial well-being of employee-benefit plans
	+ Provision of technical support to the secretary of labor and deputy secretary of labor in the area of ERISA policies and programs, and pension-benefit systems and plans
	+ Provision of policy guidance and technical assistance to congressional committees and other federal entities dealing with significant pension and benefit issues
	+ Administration of the secretary’s responsibilities under the Federal Employees’ Retirement System Act
	+ Administration of the secretary’s responsibilities under the Affordable Care Act
* Provides support for and serves as the secretary's representative on the **Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation** Board
* Provides support for and represents the secretary in his role as member of the board of trustees of the **Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance program (commonly known as Social Security)** and Medicare Trust funds[[4]](#endnote-4)
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Experience or demonstrated ability supporting and managing a staff of investigators (strongly recommended)
* Experience or demonstrated ability supporting and managing a staff of benefit advisors (helpful)
* Experience with government enforcement at the local, state or federal level (strongly recommended)
* Experience with the relevant policies, laws and regulations (helpful)
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| Competencies | * Strong leadership, managerial and communication skills
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| Phyllis C. Borzi (2009 to 2017): Research Professor in the Department of Health Policy at George Washington University Medical Center's School of Public Health and Health Services; pension and employee benefit Counsel for the House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations of the Committee on Education and Labor[[5]](#endnote-5) |
| Bradford P. Campbell (2007 to 2009): Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employee Benefits; Senior Legislative Officer for the Department of Labor; Legislative Director for Rep. Ernest Fletcher[[6]](#endnote-6) |
| Ann Laine Combs (2001 to 2006): Vice President and Chief Counsel for pensions and retirement at the American Council of Life Insurers; a principal of William M. Mercer, Inc.[[7]](#endnote-7) |

1. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ebsa/about-ebsa/about-us/what-we-do> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ebsa/about-ebsa/about-us/organization-chart> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. OPM [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ebsa/about-ebsa/about-us/organization-chart> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. <http://www.drinkerbiddle.com/people/c/campbell-bradford-p> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. <https://pressroom.vanguard.com/news/ann_combs_joins_vanguard.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-7)