

Program Overview

The FWP was mandated by the U.S. Congress as part of Section 3162 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 1993 (Public Law 102-484) which called for DOE to:

“... establish and carry out a program for the identification and on-going medical evaluation of its... former employees who are subject to significant health risks as a result of the exposure of such employees to hazardous or radioactive substances during such employment.”

The program’s activities began in 1996, and medical screening exams began in 1997.

The FWP provides medical screening exams at no cost to all interested and eligible former DOE Federal, contractor, and subcontractor workers who may have been exposed to toxic substances and hazardous conditions while working at a DOE or a covered DOE-related contractor site. The FWP medical screening exams check for potential adverse health effects caused by exposures to radiation, beryllium, asbestos, silica, welding fumes, lead, cadmium, chromium, solvents, noise, and other toxic substances and hazardous conditions. The program also serves former workers from DOE’s predecessor Agencies, i.e., the Manhattan Engineer District, the Atomic Energy Commission, and the Energy Research and Development Administration.

The FWP is overseen by the DOE Office of Health and Safety within the Office of Environment, Health, Safety and Security (EHSS) and implemented by third-party independent occupational health providers, referred to as FWP Projects, managed by medical experts known as Principal Investigators (PI) and sometimes co-PIs, from universities, labor unions, and commercial organizations. Use of the FWP Projects ensures that the FWP medical evaluation services are objective and credible. The high-quality services, professionalism, and dedication of the FWP Projects to DOE former workers over the past 25 years has resulted in a high level of satisfaction by participants as expressed in outpatient surveys (99.2 percent in FY 2022).

All FWP Projects use multiple outreach methods to notify eligible former DOE workers about the availability of FWP services. The primary method of outreach is direct mailings to former workers inviting them to participate in the program. The FWP Projects also conduct outreach events, e.g., public meetings, health fairs, etc., at DOE sites or in the communities near DOE facilities.

The FWP Projects provide for medical screening exams at clinics in communities near DOE sites, and through a nationwide network of health clinics. This network of clinics allows the FWP Projects to provide medical screening exams close to most workers’ residences. Medical screening exams have been conducted in all 50 States and several international locations.

When medical screening exam results identify adverse medical conditions, FWP Projects provide participants information that can be used for follow-up medical care with personal physicians or specialists. When appropriate, the FWP Projects will refer participants to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) for potential compensation through the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program (EEOICP).

The FWP directly benefits former DOE workers by: (1) identifying signs or symptoms of work-related health conditions at an early more treatable stage; and (2) improving workers’ understanding of health risks they may face due to potential exposures during their employment with DOE.