CLIENT ALERTS & INSIGHTS

White House Taps Vice President to Lead New "Task Force to Eliminate Fraud"

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Featured Practices: White Collar, Government Investigations & Regulatory Compliance

Key Takeaways:

- **Federal fraud enforcement is becoming faster, broader, and more coordinated**, as the Vice President-led interagency Task Force increases information-sharing and aligns civil and criminal enforcement efforts across federal benefits programs.
- **Organizations connected to federal benefits face heightened oversight and exposure**, including more rigorous audits, enhanced eligibility verification, and increased scrutiny of billing practices, grant management and third-party partners.
- **Proactive compliance is now imperative to risk-mitigation.** Organizations should ensure their internal controls, reporting mechanisms, and investigation-response readiness are sufficient to prevent isolated compliance issues from rapidly escalating into multi-agency enforcement actions.

Background

On March 16, 2026, the President signed an executive order establishing a new task force within the Executive Office of the President aimed at taking an interagency approach to combatting fraud in connection with federal benefits programs (the "Executive Order").[1]

The new "Task Force to Eliminate Fraud" ("Task Force") is to be chaired by the Vice President, and the Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission will serve as its Vice Chaiman. The task force will bring together representatives from the Department of the Treasury, the Department of Justice, the Department of Agriculture, Department of Labor, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and several other agencies and inspectors general. The Task Force's stated goal is to eliminate "fraud, waste, and abuse" in connection with federal benefits programs for housing assistance, food assistance, medical care, and other federal benefits programs. This seeks to promote and facilitate information and data sharing across agencies.

To accomplish this, the Task Force is directed to coordinate and accelerate a comprehensive national strategy to stop fraud, waste, and abuse within federal benefits programs. One of the stated goals is to develop measures to improve eligibility verification processes in federal benefits programs and develop appropriate controls before funds are obligated or disbursed to prevent improper payments. The Task Force is also responsible for evaluating and identifying transactions and processes that are most susceptible to fraud and coordinating the adoption of minimum anti-fraud requirements for such transactions.

The Executive Order comes on the heels of January announcements by the White House of the appointment of a national "fraud czar" under the supervision of the Vice President,[2] and the creation of a new national fraud enforcement division within the Department of Justice.[3]

What This Means in Practice

Based on the Executive Order, the Task Force is expected to:

- Identify fraud, waste, and abuse within federal benefits programs, including those jointly administered with state, local, tribal, and other partners.
- Develop and implement fraud identification and prevention measures across agencies and benefits programs;
- Evaluate the role of third-party contractors in detecting fraud;
- Conduct audits and ensure prospective compliance monitoring;
- Scrutinize providers or retailers associated with redemption of benefits to identify and deter fraudulent activity to such providers.

Implications

The establishment of the Task Force underscores the administration's heightened focus on identifying, mitigating, and eliminating fraud, waste, and abuse in connection with federal benefits programs. The Task Force's interagency nature is intended to facilitate information sharing, standardized approaches, and guidelines aimed at fraud prevention and deterrence. For organizations that administer, assist in providing or receive federal benefits funding, the interagency nature of the Task Force heightens the risk that a single set of facts could give rise to coordinated civil and criminal scrutiny.

The Order's increased focus on auditing and review of entities involved with federal benefits programs could give rise to more frequent or robust requests for information in the form of audits, civil investigative demands, and both civil and criminal subpoenas.

Practical Takeaways

Entities involved in the administration or provision of federal benefits programs, or entities that are the recipient of benefit dollars should pay particular attention to:

- Re-evaluating compliance programs and internal controls, particularly those related to billing and coding practices in connection with health care benefits programs, and grant management, procurement and representations made to administering agencies.
- Assessing civil-criminal risk holistically and recognizing that conduct previously addressed through audits or civil inquires may now draw parallel criminal attention.
- Reviewing and enhancing internal reporting and escalation mechanisms to ensure potential issues are identified and addressed before they mature into coordinated investigations.
- Assessing document retention, investigation-response, and privilege policies given the increased likelihood of multi-agency coordination and enforcement activity.
- Ensuring record keeping policies and protocols are tailored to the risk environment and sector in the event of program audits by the Task Force.

Conclusion

Businesses and other organizations can and should view the establishment of the Task Force as an opportunity to review, audit, and stress-test existing compliance and risk management frameworks considering the now more integrated federal enforcement environment. As coordination among federal and other agencies become integrated, organizations should be prepared for faster escalation once potential issues are identified. This is of particular importance where multiple agencies may assert overlapping jurisdiction over the same or similar conduct.

Early identification, focused remedial action and well-documented compliance decision-making and policies remain critical tools for mitigating exposure in a heightened and more coordinated enforcement and regulatory environment. Benesch's White Collar and Healthcare groups continue to monitor these developments and advise clients on proactive compliance reviews, risk assessments, audit response strategies, and enforcement preparedness. If you have questions regarding how the establishment of this new Task Force may affect your organization, or would like assistance in assessing specific risk areas, please contact your Bensch attorney.

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[1] Executive Order No. 14395: Establishing the Task Force to Eliminate Fraud, Vol. 91, No. 53 Fed. Reg. 13485 (March 16, 2026).

[2] Robert Kolansky and Briana Cowman, *From New Division to New Leadership: White House Appoints National "Fraud Czar,"* Benesch (Jan. 30, 2026), From New Division To New Leadership: White House Appoints National "Fraud Czar" | Benesch, Friedlander, Coplan & Aronoff LLP.

[3] Christopher T. Grohman, *White House Announces Creation of New National Fraud Enforcement Division*, Benesch (Jan. 27, 2026), White House Announces Creation of New National Fraud Enforcement Division | Benesch, Friedlander, Coplan & Aronoff LLP.