



*U.S. Department of
Justice*

Radiation Exposure Compensation Act Trust Fund

FY 2027 Budget &
Performance Plan

February 2026

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

I. Overview.....1

II. Summary of Program Changes1

III. Appropriations Language and Analysis of Appropriations Language2

IV. Program Activity Justification

 A. RECA Program

 1. Program Description2

V. Program Increases by Item.....N/A

VI. Program Offsets by Item.....6

VII. Exhibits

 A. Organizational Chart (**Not Applicable**)

 B. Summary of Requirements

 C. FY 2027 Program Increases/Offsets by Decision Unit

 D. Resources by DOJ Strategic Goal/Objective – NOT REQUIRED

 E. Justification for Technical and Base Adjustments (**Not Applicable**)

 F. Crosswalk of 2025 Availability

 G. Crosswalk of 2026 Availability

 H. Summary of Reimbursables Resources (**Not Applicable**)

 I. Detail of Permanent Positions by Category (**Not Applicable**)

 J. Financial Analysis of Program Changes

 K. Summary of Requirements by Object Class

 L. Status of Congressionally Requested Studies, Reports, and Evaluations (**Not Applicable**)

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I. Overview for the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act

The Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (“the Act” or “RECA”) established an administrative claims program of limited duration to address illnesses presumed to arise from the United States’ atmospheric nuclear testing and defense-related uranium extraction efforts during the Cold War. The Act tasked the Department of Justice with the administration of these claims according to bright-line statutory eligibility criteria, with lump sum compensation ranging from \$50,000 to \$100,000 depending on the context of radiation exposure. The Department established the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act Program (“the Program”) within the Civil Division to fairly and efficiently administer the Act.

The statutory filing period for claims commenced in April 1992 and ended on June 10, 2024. In that time, the Department received 57,081 claims. As of December 31, 2025, the Department has awarded more than \$2.7 billion in connection with 42,308 approved applications from the first iteration of RECA. Only 16 claims remain pending, representing the last of those received by the June 10, 2024, filing deadline. The Department is working to adjudicate these remaining claims consistent with the requirements of the Act.

On July 4, 2025, President Trump enacted Public Law 119-21. Sections 100201-100205 of this law reauthorize RECA until December 31, 2028, add multiple new eligible populations, and create a restitution system under RECA for persons who became ill after presumed exposure to Manhattan Project waste. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that approximately 75,000 claims will be filed under the RECA reauthorization.

The RECA reauthorization creates a new Manhattan Project Waste (MPW) compensation program for communities located near Department of Energy contractors in Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alaska. Subtitle D also expands coverage under RECA’s existing “Downwinder” provisions to the entire states of Utah and New Mexico, as well as to lower Mohave County, Arizona, while maintaining the existing covered counties in Arizona and Nevada. Unlike previous RECA, Subtitle D’s downwind coverage includes western populations centers such as Salt Lake City and Albuquerque. Finally, Subtitle D extends coverage to new populations of uranium miners, uranium millers, uranium ore transporters, and new occupations of core drillers and mine remediation workers.

On January 29, 2026, the Department’s new online RECA application portal went live, providing a significant upgrade from the prior process requiring paper applications submitted via mail. The portal will ease the application process for claimants and provide greater efficiency in claims processing.

Electronic copies of the Department of Justice’s Congressional Budget Justifications and Capital Asset Plan and Business Case exhibits can be viewed or downloaded from the Internet using the Internet address: <https://www.justice.gov/doj/budget-and-performance>

FY 2027 Estimate

For Fiscal Year (FY) 2027, \$1.9 billion is requested for the RECA Trust Fund.

II. Summary of Program Changes

Item Name	Description	Pos.	FTE	Amount (\$000)	Pg.
Program Decrease – Claims Payments	Funding for the RECA program to pay eligible claims.	0	0	-\$292,500	6

III. Appropriations Language and Analysis of Appropriations Language

Not applicable.

IV. Program Activity Justification

Mission Statement: Fairly and expeditiously adjudicate claims, fully consistent with the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, as amended; educate the public about the Act; and develop strategies for improving the Program.

RECA Program	Direct Pos.	Estimated FTE	Amount (\$000)
2025 Enacted	0	0	\$360,000
2026 Enacted	0	0	\$2,177,592
Adjustments to Base and Technical Adjustments	0	0	\$0
2027 Current Services	0	0	\$2,177,592
2027 Program Offsets	0	0	-\$292,500
2027 Request	0	0	\$1,885,092
Total Change 2026-2027	0	0	\$1,885,092

Program Description

From 1945 through 1962, the United States conducted nearly 200 atmospheric nuclear weapons tests while building the arsenal that became the cornerstone of the Nation’s Cold War security strategy. At the same time, other world powers also engaged in testing nuclear weapons. The mining and processing of uranium ore that was conducted by thousands of workers was essential to the development of nuclear weapons. Navajo uranium miners, and those living downwind of the Nevada Test Site, filed class action lawsuits that appellate courts eventually dismissed. Congress then devised a program to make partial restitution to the individuals who developed serious illnesses after their exposure to radiation released during above-ground atmospheric nuclear tests or following their employment in the uranium industry.

Congress passed RECA on October 5, 1990, and later broadened the scope of its coverage on July 10, 2000. The Act established monetary compensation for individuals who contracted

specified diseases in three defined populations: Uranium workers (Section 5 claimants) – uranium miners, millers, and ore transporters received \$100,000; onsite participants (Section 4 claimants) – individuals present at atmospheric nuclear test locations received \$75,000; and downwinders (Section 4 claimants) who lived downwind of the Nevada Test Site received \$50,000. Department of Justice regulations were designed to utilize existing records so that claims could be resolved in a reliable, objective, and non-adversarial manner, with little administrative cost to the United States or to the claimant. By statute, the period in which to file claims under RECA as described above ended on June 10, 2024.

On July 4, 2025 Pub. L. No. 119-21 was enacted; sections 100201-100205 of this law reauthorize claims against the RECA Trust Fund until December 31, 2028. In addition, the bill made the following expansive changes to eligibility:

- Expanded Downwind eligibility to new geographic areas, including the entire states of Idaho, Utah, and New Mexico; slightly extended the covered periods of time in which presence in certain areas confers potential eligibility; increased award amounts for Downwinders and Onsite Participants to \$100,000; and expanded the list of eligible conditions.
- Added core drillers and remediation workers to the list of covered uranium industry occupations; extends coverage to uranium workers from 1971 – 1990; and expanded the list of eligible conditions for uranium miners.
- Created a novel compensation system for individuals presumed to have been exposed to Manhattan Project waste in specified areas of Missouri, Alaska, and Kentucky for at least two years from 1949 through December 31, 2027. Meritorious claims filed while the affected individual is living are entitled to the greater of \$50,000 or all unreimbursed out-of-pocket medical expenses incurred as a result of their specified disease. In a meritorious claim submitted after an affected individual has died, a single payment of \$25,000 is distributed to either the spouse of a deceased individual or to the children of the deceased individual in equal shares if there is no surviving spouse.

Funding History

RECA claims are currently paid from two funding sources:

- The Consolidated Appropriations Act for 2005 contained language that made funding for the RECA Trust Fund mandatory and indefinite beginning in FY 2006. The Fund exclusively paid onsite participants and downwinders (or Section 4 claimants) through the June 10, 2024 sunset. After reauthorization, the Fund now pays claimants under Section 4 and Section 5A, which addresses claims for Manhattan Project Waste. Claims against the RECA Trust Fund are authorized through December 31, 2028.
- The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2005 contained language requiring the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Fund to pay uranium workers – uranium miners, millers, ore transporters, core drillers, and remediation workers (or Section 5 claimants). This trust fund does not terminate and is administered by the Department of Labor.

Claims Data

Below is data concerning Section 4, Section 5, and Section 5A claims. Actual data for the last three years, as well as claim estimates for FY 2026 and FY 2027 are provided. Due to the significant changes in eligibility, the Civil Division is basing FY 2026 and FY 2027 estimates on initial Congressional Budget Office calculations.

Claims Filed and Approved					
	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Estimate	FY 2027 Estimate
Downwinders and Onsite Participants					
Downwinders					
Pending, Beginning of Year	222	57	465	219	3,453
Claims Filed	754	1,257	292	17,490	15,840
Claims Approved	821	798	393	14,007	14,008
Onsite Participants					
Pending, Beginning of Year	124	25	135	0	10
Claims Filed	216	354	6	160	160
Claims Approved	222	190	53	150	150
Subtotal					
Pending, Beginning of Year	346	82	600	219	3,463
Claims Filed	970	1,611	298	17,650	16,000
Claims Approved	1,043	988	446	14,157	14,158
Uranium Miners, Millers, and Ore Transporters					
Pending, Beginning of Year	130	55	230	175	1,305
Claims Filed	123	351	44	5,683	3,100
Claims Approved	103	107	99	4,553	3,457
Manhattan Project Waste¹					
Pending, Beginning of Year	N/A	N/A	0	484	3,961
Claims Filed	N/A	N/A	493	20,980	6,000
Claims Approved	N/A	N/A	9	17,503	9,025
Total Program Workload					
Pending, Beginning of Year	476	137	830	878	8,729
Claims Filed	1,093	1,962	835	44,313	25,100
Claims Approved	1,146	1,095	554	36,213	26,640
¹ Manhattan Project Waste claims are still establishing a baseline of historical data and are therefore less certain than other projections.					

Radiation Exposure Compensation Act Workload					
Claims Filed and Approved					
(Dollars in Thousands)					
	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Estimate	FY 2027 Estimate
Section 4 Claims					
Downwinders					
Claims Approved	821	798	393	14,007	14,008
Value of Approved Claims	\$41,050	\$39,900	\$39,300	\$1,400,700	\$1,400,800
Onsite Participants					
Claims Approved	222	190	53	150	150
Value of Approved Claims	\$15,299	\$12,678	\$3,957	\$15,000	\$15,000
Manhattan Project Waste¹					
MPW - Self-File					
Claims Approved	N/A	N/A	9	12,933	6,995
Value of Approved Claims	N/A	N/A	\$450	\$646,650	\$349,750
MPW - Eligible Surviving Beneficiary					
Claims Approved	N/A	N/A	0	4,570	2,030
Value of Approved Claims	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$114,250	\$50,750
Total Value of Approvals	\$56,349	\$52,578	\$43,707	\$2,176,600	\$1,816,300
¹ Manhattan Project Waste claims are still establishing a baseline of historical data and are therefore less certain than other projections.					

V. Program Increases by Item

Not Applicable.

VI. Program Offsets by Item

A. RECA CLAIMS PAYMENTS

Budget Decision Unit(s): Radiation Exposure Compensation Act

Organizational Programs: Civil Division, Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) Program

Program Decrease: Positions 0; Atty 0; FTE 0; Dollars -\$292,500

Description of Item

The Civil Division seeks a program decrease of \$292.5 million from the FY 2026 Enacted to pay Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) claims in FY 2027.

Justification

RECA is an administrative claim program established as an alternative to litigation for persons who contracted certain illnesses following the United States' atmospheric nuclear testing program during the Cold War and associated defense-related uranium extraction. RECA claims are filed directly with the Department of Justice (DOJ), and entitlement to compensation is determined based on a pure record review.

The Civil Division administered RECA from its enactment in October 1990 through its statutory sunset on June 10, 2024. In that time, 57,081 claims were filed, and 42,160 were approved, totaling more than \$2.7 billion in compensation. On July 4, 2025, Public Law 119-21 Subtitle C sections 100201-100205, reauthorized the filing of claims under RECA effective immediately until December 31, 2027, with evidence supporting claims for unreimbursed out of pocket medical expenses accepted until December 31, 2028. Based on CBO's original projections, DOJ estimates that as many as 100,000 new claims could be received during the 29-month filing period under the amended RECA, of which as many as 78,000 could be paid. RECA requires DOJ to determine entitlement to a claim within one-year of its receipt, or the claim is deemed awarded as a matter of law and paid. Due to an initial influx in claims for the first full year since reauthorization, claims are expected to decrease in 2027 as those who were anticipating this law passing quickly submitted.

Impact on Performance

The requested decrease will not impact performance. The Civil Division will still be able to process and pay all valid claims.

Funding

1. Base Funding

<i>FY 2025 Enacted</i>				<i>FY 2026 Enacted</i>				<i>FY 2027 Current Services</i>			
Pos	Agt/Atty	FTE	Amount (\$000)	Pos	Agt/Atty	FTE	Amount (\$000)	Pos	Agt/Atty	FTE	Amount (\$000)
0	0	0	\$360,000	0	0	0	\$2,177,592	0	0	0	\$2,177,592

2. Personnel Offset Cost Summary

Not applicable

3. Non-Personnel Offset Cost Summary

Non-Personnel Item	FY 2027 Request (\$000)	Unit Cost (\$000)	Quantity	Annualizations (\$000)	
				FY 2028 (net change from 2027)	FY 2029 (net change from 2028)
Claims	-\$292,500	N/A	N/A	\$0	\$0
Total Non-Personnel	-\$292,500			\$0	\$0

4. Total Request for this Item

Category	Positions			Amount Requested (\$000)			Annualizations (\$000)	
	Count	Agt/Atty	FTE	Personnel	Non-Personnel	Total	FY 2028 (net change from 2027)	FY 2029 (net change from 2028)
Current Services	0	0	0	\$0	\$2,177,592	\$2,177,592	\$0	\$0
Offsets	0	0	0	\$0	-\$292,500	-\$292,500	\$0	\$0
Grand Total	0	0	0	\$0	\$1,885,092	\$1,885,092	\$0	\$0