

Abstract of Speech Template

Title: Freelance Isn't Free: Extending the Rights of Freelance Workers in New York City

- Name of Speaker: Benjamin Holt
- Position: Deputy Commissioner, DCWP

In 2015, New York City created the Office of Labor Policy and Standards (OLPS) to be the City's central resource for private sector workers. OLPS is housed in the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP) whose mission is to protect and enhance the daily economic lives of New Yorkers to promote thriving communities. DCWP conducts outreach and education to workers and employers, enforces the City's workplace laws, and advocates for new policies and laws to protect working people.

Research has shown that freelancers often work without written contracts, have trouble getting paid on time, and do not get paid all the money they had been promised. Indeed, one's status as an independent contractor – and not as an employee – serves as a barrier to many of the rights and benefits associated with traditional employment relationships.

In 2016, New York City became the first jurisdiction in the United States to pass legislation protecting the rights of freelance workers to have a written contract and to be paid on time for the work they perform. In addition to the specific protections included in the law, it was an important step to begin redressing the imbalance in rights between those categorized as employees and independent contractors. The Freelance Isn't Free Act (Freelancer Law) created enhanced rights for freelancers and a unique administrative enforcement system, and also gave them the right to go to court. The Freelancer Law went into effect on May 15, 2017.

This presentation will review the background of the Freelancer law, the underlying legal issue of worker misclassification, the key provisions in the law and implementing rules, and the DCWP and court enforcement processes, while also reporting on the lessons and outcomes from the first two years of the law.

- Nationality/ City: British/NYC
- Session: 4



