

New survey measures demand for labor

For decades, the United States has had a strong economic indicator of *labor supply*—the unemployment rate. However, until now, there has been no parallel measure of *labor demand*. (The Bureau of Labor Statistics has collected turnover and job openings data, but not in a way that covered all States and industries in both the private and public sectors on an ongoing basis.) The BLS now has developed the Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS), a new survey which measures job openings, hires, and separations. JOLTS information can help in assessing the state of the labor market and determining imbalances between the supply of and demand for labor. The data also can assist in detecting upward pressure on wages, and may even help predict an economic downturn. Presently, the only other widely available measure of labor demand is The Conference Board's Help-Wanted Advertising Index, a measure of the number of job advertisements published in newspapers.

JOLTS collects counts of employment, job openings, hires, and three types of separations: quits (voluntary), layoffs and discharges (involuntary), and other separations. Employment data are collected for the pay period that includes the 12th of the month, job openings as of the last business day of the month, and turnover data (hires and separations) for the entire month. The standard JOLTS form is presented in exhibit 1.

Survey scope. The JOLTS sample is drawn from the BLS Longitudinal Database for the 50 States and the District of Columbia. All nonagricultural industries except private households are within the scope of JOLTS. Within agriculture, only agricultural services is included. In addition to private sector

data, public sector data are collected from local, State, and Federal governments.

Sample design and rotation. The JOLTS sample includes 16,000 establishments, divided into one virtual certainty panel and 18 noncertainty panels. A virtual certainty panel is one in which establishments have been selected with nearly 100 percent probability, and they will remain in the sample throughout the course of the survey or until a new JOLTS sample is selected. Each noncertainty panel, when combined with the virtual certainty panel, represents the entire universe. One noncertainty panel is enrolled in the survey each month, meaning that after 18 months, all of the noncertainty panels will be enrolled. The virtual certainty panel was completed over a 5-month period. After 18 months in the survey, one noncertainty panel will be rolled out of the sample each month and replaced by a new noncertainty panel.

Data collection. The data are collected by the BLS regional office in Atlanta, Georgia. Sample units are enrolled in the survey by telephone, and then the data are collected via computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) for 6 months. After 6 months of CATI collection, respondents are moved to touchtone data entry (TDE) for the remainder of their time in the sample (generally another 12 months). In exceptional circumstances, units may remain in CATI for their entire collection period, or may choose to provide their data via fax. In addition, some units may elect to mail their data on paper or through alternate media.

Address refinement and enrollment of establishments into the JOLTS sample take place immediately prior to the end of the reference month. Data collection occurs as soon as the reference month is over.

Published estimates. JOLTS estimates will include both rates and numbers for job openings and labor turnover.

Top-level estimates, that is, estimates that include all industries and all ownerships (private industries and Federal, State, and local governments) are available for the Nation as a whole, and for four census regions (North East, Midwest, South East, and West).¹ The national estimates are further broken out into public or private sector; the national private sector estimates are further subdivided into nine combined sectors. All estimates are based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

While there is a great deal of interest in job openings data by occupation, wage level, and finer industry and geographic detail, the present sample does not support such estimates.

After the full sample has been introduced in late 2001, JOLTS estimates will be released to the public. A press release will provide preliminary estimates for the current reference month and final estimates for the prior reference month. An annual bulletin also is planned. Additional information regarding JOLTS is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov, via e-mail to JOLTSINFO@bls.gov, or by telephone at (202) 691-5870.

Note

¹ The regions are:

North East—Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont;

Midwest—Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin;

South East—Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia;

West—Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Exhibit 1. Sample JOLT form with instructions



Job Openings and Labor Turnover Report

U.S. Department of Labor

Bureau of Labor Statistics, JOLTS DCC, 61 Forsyth Street SW, Rm 7T50, Atlanta, GA 30303 / Phone: (800) 341-4620 / FAX: (800) 876-2815 / www.bls.gov

This report is authorized by 29 U.S.C.2. Your voluntary cooperation is needed to make the results of this survey comprehensive, accurate, and timely. The Bureau of Labor Statistics will use the information you provide for statistical purposes only and will hold the information in confidence to the full extent permitted by law.

BLS Form No. BLS-1411-C1
Form Approved:
OMB No. 1220-0170
Approval Expires 3/31/2003

IWR# SIC4 O A AUXNA6 CTY TWP ANAVEMP RUN M

(999) 999-9999 Ext. 9999 FAX (999) 999-9999

LEGAL-NAME XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX35
TRADE NAME XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX35
ATTN: CONTACT NAMEXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX??
JOLTS ADDRESSXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX35
JOLTS ADDRESS2XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX35
JOLTS CITYXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX30 ST ZIP5X-ZIP4

Your reporting number is: **12345678**

Need help with this form?
Call 1-800-341-4620.

1 This form requests information about job openings and employee turnover at:

TRADE NAME OR LEGAL NAME XXXXXXXX35 COUNTY: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX20
PHYS LOCATION OR JOLTS ADDRESSXXX35 RPT-UNIT-DESCR XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX35
PHYS LOCATION 2 OR JOLTS ADDRESS2X35 UI: 1234567890 in STATEXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
PL-CITY OR JOLTS CITYXX30 ST 12345-6789

2 Please check all that apply. Employees are paid

each week every two weeks twice a month once a month other

3 Please provide data for the time period indicated for each item. Enter 0 if none. See the explanation of these terms on the back of this page.

Report for month of:	EMPLOYMENT	JOB OPENINGS	HIRES	SEPARATIONS		
	Number of full- or part-time employees who worked or received pay for the pay period that includes the 12th of the month	A job is open if it meets all three conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A specific position exists • Work could start <i>within 30 days</i> • You are actively seeking workers from outside this location to fill the position 	A hire is any addition to your payroll, and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be new, rehired, or recalled from layoff • May be permanent, short-term, or seasonal 	Report by type of separation in the columns below. Column D Quits, except retirements Column E Layoffs, discharges, and other terminations initiated by the employer Column F Other separations due to: retirements; transfers from this location; deaths; employee disability		
	A Total Employment for the pay period that includes the 12th of the month	B Number of Job Openings on the last business day of the month	C Hires for the entire month	D Quits	E Layoffs and Discharges	F Other Separations
				----- for the entire month -----		
Jan 2000						
Feb 2000						
Mar 2000						
Apr 2000						
May 2000						
Jun 2000						

IMPORTANT

This form requests information about employees *on your payroll* at the location shown in Section 1 on the front of this page. Please follow these instructions as you prepare your information. C1/TD1

Column A

Total Employment for the pay period including the 12th of the month.

Report all persons on your payroll who worked or received pay for the pay period that includes the 12th of the month.

INCLUDE:

- Full-time and part-time employees
- Permanent, short-term, and seasonal employees
- Salaried and hourly workers
- Employees on paid vacation or other paid leave

DO NOT INCLUDE:

- Proprietors and partners of unincorporated businesses
- Unpaid family workers
- Employees on strike for the entire pay period
- Employees on leave without pay for the entire pay period
- Employees of temporary help agencies, employee leasing companies, outside contractors, or consultants

Column B

Job Openings

on the last business day of the month.

Report all positions that are open (not filled) on the last business day of the month. A job is open only if it meets **all three** of these conditions:

- A specific position exists and there is work available for that position. The position can be full-time or part-time, and it can be permanent, short-term, or seasonal, **and**
- The *job* could start *within 30 days*, whether or not you find a suitable candidate during that time, **and**
- You are *actively recruiting* workers from *outside* the location shown in Section 1 on the front of this page.

What is active recruiting? Active recruiting means your establishment is taking steps to fill a position. It may include advertising in newspapers, on television, or on radio; posting Internet notices; posting "help wanted" signs; networking with colleagues or making "word of mouth" announcements; accepting applications; interviewing candidates; contacting employment agencies; or soliciting employees at job fairs, state or local employment offices, or similar sources.

DO NOT INCLUDE:

- Positions open only to internal transfers, promotions or demotions, or recall from layoffs
- Openings for positions with start dates more than 30 days in the future
- Positions for which employees have been hired, but the employees have not yet reported for work
- Positions to be filled by employees of temporary help agencies, employee leasing companies, outside contractors, or consultants

Column C

Hires for the entire month.

Report all additions to your payroll during the month.

INCLUDE:

- Newly hired and rehired employees
- Permanent, short-term, and seasonal employees
- Full-time and part-time employees
- On-call or intermittent employees who returned to work after having been formally separated
- Workers who were hired and separated during the month
- Transfers from other locations
- Employees who were recalled to a job at this location following a layoff lasting more than 7 days

DO NOT INCLUDE:

- Transfers or promotions within this location
- Employees returning from strikes
- Employees of temporary help agencies, employee leasing companies, outside contractors, or consultants

Columns D, E, and F

Separations

for the entire month.

Report all separations from your payroll during the month. Report by type of separation.

- **Column D, Quits:** Employees who left voluntarily. Exception: Report retirements or transfers to other locations with Other Separations in Column F.
- **Column E, Layoffs and Discharges:** Involuntary separations initiated by the employer, including:
 - Layoffs with no intent to rehire
 - Discharges because positions were eliminated
 - Discharges resulting from mergers, downsizing, or plant closings
 - Firings or other discharges for cause
 - Terminations of seasonal employees (whether or not they are expected to return next season)
 - Layoffs (suspensions from pay status) lasting or expected to last more than 7 days. (If the employee was later recalled, also include in the Hires column.)
- **Column F, Other Separations:** Retirements; transfers to other locations; deaths; or separations due to employee disability

DO NOT INCLUDE:

- Transfers within this location
- Employees on strike
- Employees of temporary help agencies, employee leasing companies, outside contractors, or consultants

We estimate it will take an average of 10 minutes to complete this form each month, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this information. If you have any comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of this survey, send them to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE, Room 4840, Washington, DC 20212. You are not required to respond to the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.