

CHANGES IN FEDERAL CIVILIAN EMPLOYMENT: AN UPDATE

June 1999

In response to a number of inquiries, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has again updated its analysis of governmentwide trends in federal civilian employment from the 1996 CBO memorandum, *Changes in Federal Civilian Employment*. (The last update was issued in April 1998.) Among other things, this analysis updates information on how executive branch employment compares with the statutory caps.

The analysis shows employment totals computed in two different ways. Figures in Table 1 are annual averages of monthly employment counts. The totals in the section on statutory caps on employment, however, measure employment on a full-time-equivalent (FTE) basis, as that is the measure used in establishing the caps. (FTE totals translate employment to full-time equivalents. Under that approach, for example, two half-time workers translate to one full-time-equivalent worker.)

Figures in the text cover most agencies except the Postal Service and those engaged in intelligence gathering. In the tables, where appropriate, total employment is shown with and without the Postal Service. The Postal Service merits separate consideration for a number of reasons: it has its own pay system that features collective bargaining, which is rare at the federal level; it is funded from revenues earned from the sale of postage, and it is not subject to the statutory caps on employment.

Changes in Governmentwide Employment

Between 1997 and 1998, federal civilian employment at the Department of Defense (DoD) continued to drop significantly, falling by 37,900, or 5 percent (see Table 1). By contrast, total employment in nondefense agencies remained almost unchanged, falling by 0.1 percent.

Since 1985, employment has decreased by a net of 350,400, or 16 percent. All of that decrease occurred in DoD, representing a 32 percent drop in employment for that agency. Although many nondefense agencies have significantly cut staff in recent years, total nondefense employment in 1998 had not fallen below 1985's level. The Department of Justice continues to be a notable exception to the recent downward trend in employment among nondefense agencies.

Changes in Executive Branch Employment Compared with Statutory Caps

The Federal Workforce Restructuring Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-226) established caps on total employment in the executive branch for each year from 1994 through 1999. By 1999 that law, as amended, would reduce employment, measured on an FTE basis, to 1.88 million.

Data from the Office of Management and Budget show reductions from the 1993 employment figure totaling 348,600 (see Table 2). The data also show that employment in 1998 totaled 1.79 million, a figure already below the 1.88 million targeted for 1999.

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TABLE 1. NUMBER OF FEDERAL CIVILIAN WORKERS BY BRANCH AND AGENCY, FISCAL YEARS 1985-1998
(In thousands of workers)

	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Change, 1985-1998		Change, 1997-1998	
															Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent
All Agencies (Excluding Postal Service)																		
Legislative Branch	39.4	37.8	37.6	38.1	37.9	37.9	38.2	39.1	38.7	36.9	34.4	32.4	31.4	31.0	-8.4	-21.3	-0.4	-1.3
Judicial Branch	17.6	18.6	19.5	20.8	21.5	22.6	24.6	27.0	28.1	27.9	28.3	29.0	29.8	30.9	13.3	75.6	1.1	3.7
Executive Branch																		
Departments																		
Agriculture	115.4	111.2	111.0	115.2	117.8	118.9	118.4	122.3	120.9	115.6	109.1	105.1	102.8	100.9	-14.5	-12.6	-1.9	-1.8
Commerce	35.5	35.1	34.5	39.5	49.1	155.9	45.5	37.8	38.3	37.7	37.3	35.8	34.6	39.5	4.0	11.3	4.9	14.2
DoD	1,080.3	1,088.5	1,084.0	1,072.8	1,066.9	1,060.0	1,014.7	1,003.7	952.1	900.3	851.8	811.3	767.8	729.9	-350.4	-32.4	-37.9	-4.9
Education	5.1	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.8	4.9	5.1	5.0	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.6	4.7	-0.4	-7.8	0.1	2.2
Energy	16.8	16.7	16.7	16.8	17.1	17.5	18.6	20.5	20.7	20.2	20.0	18.8	17.5	16.4	-0.4	-2.4	-1.1	-6.3
HHS ^a	141.8	136.9	130.3	123.9	122.6	123.0	126.3	131.6	131.6	129.6	127.6	124.6	126.1	125.4	-16.4	-11.6	-0.7	-0.6
HUD	12.3	11.9	12.5	13.2	13.4	13.5	13.8	14.1	13.3	13.1	12.3	11.6	11.1	10.0	-2.3	-18.7	-1.1	-9.9
Interior	76.2	74.2	72.5	74.0	75.2	75.0	76.4	80.4	81.5	79.5	75.5	70.4	68.7	69.7	-6.5	-8.5	1.0	1.5
Justice	62.9	65.3	67.7	73.4	78.9	81.6	87.0	94.8	98.0	97.8	100.5	106.4	113.3	119.8	56.9	90.5	6.5	5.7
Labor	18.3	18.0	17.8	18.1	18.4	17.9	17.7	18.0	17.7	17.1	16.5	15.6	15.4	15.8	-2.5	-13.7	0.4	2.6
State	25.1	25.4	25.4	25.7	25.3	25.3	25.5	25.9	26.1	25.9	25.1	24.6	24.2	24.4	-0.7	-2.8	0.2	0.8
Transportation	62.4	61.6	61.7	62.7	64.6	66.5	67.8	70.3	70.0	66.9	63.8	63.0	63.2	64.1	1.7	2.7	0.9	1.4
Treasury	134.7	138.3	147.0	162.8	163.5	162.2	169.1	169.8	164.3	159.7	163.3	156.7	151.5	148.4	13.7	10.2	-3.1	-2.0
VA ^b	244.7	243.8	246.3	246.7	245.2	247.3	252.7	257.8	263.8	264.2	262.0	256.2	245.7	242.2	-2.5	-1.0	-3.5	-1.4
Subtotal	2,031.5	2,031.6	2,032.0	2,049.5	2,062.6	2,169.4	2,038.4	2,052.1	2,003.3	1,932.5	1,869.7	1,804.9	1,746.5	1,711.2	-320.3	-15.8	-35.3	-2.0
Independent Agencies																		
GSA	27.7	24.9	22.0	20.4	19.9	20.2	20.6	21.1	20.7	19.8	17.2	15.9	14.6	14.2	-13.5	-48.7	-0.4	-2.7
NASA	22.5	22.1	22.6	22.9	24.2	24.5	25.3	25.6	25.2	24.1	22.6	21.4	20.3	19.3	-3.2	-14.2	-1.0	-4.9
All other	128.8	129.0	131.1	133.9	127.4	134.4	139.8	140.0	140.2	138.1	128.3	118.7	113.7	110.5	-18.3	-14.2	-3.2	-2.8
Subtotal	179.0	176.0	175.7	177.2	171.5	179.1	185.7	186.7	186.1	182.0	168.1	156.0	148.6	144.0	-35.0	-19.6	-4.6	-3.1
Total	2,210.5	2,207.6	2,207.7	2,226.7	2,234.1	2,348.5	2,224.1	2,238.8	2,189.4	2,114.5	2,037.8	1,960.9	1,895.1	1,855.2	-355.3	-16.1	-39.9	-2.1
All Agencies	2,267.5	2,264.0	2,264.8	2,285.6	2,293.5	2,409.0	2,286.9	2,304.9	2,256.2	2,179.3	2,100.5	2,022.3	1,956.3	1,917.1	-350.4	-15.5	-39.2	-2.0
Defense and Nondefense Employment Totals (Excluding Postal Service)																		
DoD	1,080.3	1,088.5	1,084.0	1,072.8	1,066.9	1,060.0	1,014.7	1,003.7	952.1	900.3	851.8	811.3	767.8	729.9	-350.4	-32.4	-37.9	-4.9
Non-DoD, Non-Postal Service	1,187.2	1,175.5	1,180.8	1,212.8	1,226.6	1,349.0	1,272.2	1,301.2	1,304.1	1,279.0	1,248.7	1,211.0	1,188.5	1,187.2	0	0	-1.3	-0.1
Employment Totals (Including Postal Service)																		
Postal Service	733.9	782.7	810.3	827.7	839.9	824.3	813.5	800.9	786.6	813.6	842.0	858.4	860.1	865.7	131.8	18.0	5.6	0.7
Total Postal and Other Agencies	3,001.4	3,046.7	3,075.1	3,113.3	3,133.4	3,233.3	3,100.4	3,105.8	3,042.8	2,992.9	2,942.5	2,880.7	2,816.4	2,782.8	-218.6	-7.3	-33.6	-1.2

SOURCE: Congressional Budget Office using data provided by the Office of Personnel Management.

NOTES: Data are averages of monthly employment counts. Averages cover both permanent and temporary appointments, as well as full-time, part-time, and other schedules. All geographic areas are represented, as are all agencies except the Central Intelligence Agency and other intelligence-gathering organizations.

The table shows Department of Defense and nondefense totals as well as a total that includes the Postal Service. Employees of that agency have a separate pay system funded by the sale of postage. The agency is off-budget and was not part of efforts to reduce employment under the Federal Workforce Restructuring Act of 1994.

DoD = Department of Defense; HUD = Department of Housing and Urban Development; GSA = General Services Administration; NASA = National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

a. Data for the Department of Health and Human Services include the Social Security Administration, which became an independent agency in 1995.

b. The Department of Veterans Affairs replaced its predecessor, the Veterans Administration, in March 1989.

TABLE 2. FULL-TIME-EQUIVALENT EMPLOYMENT IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH,
1993-1998 (In thousands of workers)

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	<u>Change, 1993-1998</u>	
							Number	Percent
Department of Defense	931.8	868.3	821.7	778.9	745.8	707.2	-224.6	-24.1
Nondefense Agencies	<u>1,207.0</u>	<u>1,184.4</u>	<u>1,148.5</u>	<u>1,112.8</u>	<u>1,088.9</u>	<u>1,083.0</u>	<u>-124.0</u>	-10.3
Total	2,138.8	2,052.7	1,970.2	1,891.7	1,834.7	1,790.2	-348.6	-16.3

SOURCE: Congressional Budget Office using data provided by the Office of Management and Budget.

NOTES: Totals are full-time equivalents. Data cover executive branch agencies only.