

The September Review

Our first article this month examines the effect of changes in business ownership on workers related to the types of jobs they hold. Analyzing micro-data from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, Dina Itkin demonstrates that there are differential outcomes by occupation on employment and wage levels resulting from new ownership. Among a number of areas of inquiry, she identifies the industry sectors most affected by ownership change. Further, she investigates the relationship between changes in occupational composition resulting from new ownership and the employment size of the affected business. The author identifies some limitations of the study, noting, for instance, that some staffing changes might be in transition and only partially captured using her methodology.

Bruce J. Bergman compares mass layoff activity in the New York City area with that of the Nation as a whole in the years prior to and after the 2001 recession. With the largest metropolitan workforce in the country, trends in the Big Apple regarding the separation of workers from their employers are always going to be of interest. Bergman finds a “qualitatively different” pattern in the industry distribution of layoffs prior to, and after, 2001, in New York, in contrast to the national experience.

A trio of authors with a demonstrated interest in longitudinal studies provides a Conference Report in this month’s MLR focusing on information from the 1997 cohort of

the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth. In May of this past summer, BLS hosted a conference highlighting the latest research from this survey, and Dan Black, Robert Michael, and Charles Pierret provide a “brief and informal characterization” of some of the more than a dozen studies presented. They summarize the research on topics ranging from social behaviors (such as marriage and offspring and the influence of siblings) to education (including the effects of parental resources on educational attainment) to the changing characteristics of youth employment.

Finally this month, James Campbell provides his annual update to patterns of multiple jobholding among the various States.

A profile of the working poor

The majority of the 36.5 million persons in poverty in the United States are children or adults outside of the labor force. However, there are many people who are active participants in the labor force for at least half a year, but whose incomes still fall below the official poverty level. Each year the Bureau publishes data on these so-called “working poor.”

In 2006, it is estimated that 7.4 million individuals were in these circumstances, meaning they spent 27 weeks or more working or looking for work, but lived at or below the official poverty threshold relevant to their family structure. They made up 5.1 percent of all persons in the labor force for 27 weeks or more, down a bit from 2005.

Some of the socioeconomic factors that often are cited as contributing to labor market outcomes are found to influence who falls into the working-poor status. Persons with the least amount of education, for instance, make up a far higher percentage of the working poor – almost 14 percent – than those with a college degree (less than 2 percent). Persons in occupations that tend to be lower paying have a higher probability of being among the working poor, as do part-time, as compared to full-time, workers. Married couple families facing the extra expenses of childrearing are much more likely to be among the working poor than married couple families without children.

A Profile of the Working Poor, 2006 can be found online at <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpswp2006.pdf>

Happy Birthday, TED!

Who is TED, you ask? As noted in this column before, “he” is The Editor’s Desk, a daily feature published by BLS on its Web site. TED is a reliable source of fresh content posted every business day. It was the first online-only publication available from the Bureau. Since the first issue was published in September 1998, TED hasn’t missed a day of work, as over 2,400 entries have been issued so far. Congratulations to TED, and to all who help produce this feature so reliably.

For additional information about the 10th anniversary of *The Editor’s Desk*, please go to <http://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/tenyears.htm> □