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Media contact: (202) 691-5902

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JOB OPENINGS AND LABOR TURNOVER: DECEMBER 2008

On the last business day of December, there were 2.7 million job openings in the United States, and the job openings rate was 1.9 percent, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. The job openings rate in December was the lowest point so far in the 8-year-old series. The hires rate was essentially unchanged in December at 2.9 percent and remains low. The total separations rate jumped to 3.7 percent, due to rising layoffs and discharges. This release includes estimates of the number and rate of job openings, hires, and separations for the total nonfarm sector by industry and geographic region.

Chart 1. Job openings rate, seasonally adjusted,
Percent January 2006 - December 2008

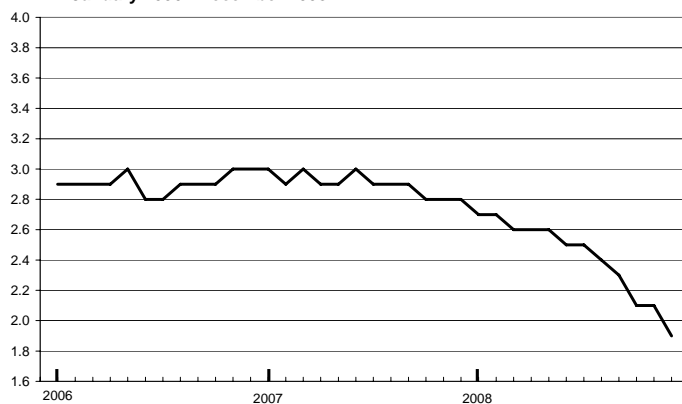


Chart 2. Hires and separations rates, seasonally adjusted,
Percent January 2006 - December 2008



Beginning with the release of January 2009 data on March 10, 2009, BLS will implement improvements to the methodology used to generate estimates of hires, separations, and job openings from the Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) program. These changes are designed to improve the measurement of hires, separations, and openings and to more closely align the hires and separations estimates with monthly employment change as measured by the BLS Current Employment Statistics (establishment) survey. All JOLTS historical series will be revised to incorporate the new methods and also will be released on March 10. See the JOLTS web page (<http://www.bls.gov/jlt/>) for a more complete description of these changes.

Job Openings

Although job openings were essentially unchanged from November to December, the number of job openings has trended downward for 18 months. At 2.7 million in December, monthly openings were down 1.4 million, or 35 percent, since the starting point of the downward trend in July 2007. The job openings rate was 1.9 percent in December, a new series low. The job openings rate changed significantly in December in two industries—retail trade and education and health services—in which the rate fell. The rate did not change significantly in December in any of the regions. (See table 1.)

Table A. Job openings, hires, and total separations by industry, seasonally adjusted

Industry	Job openings			Hires			Total separations		
	Dec. 2007	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^P	Dec. 2007	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^P	Dec. 2007	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^P
	Levels (in thousands)								
Total ¹	3,974	2,855	2,692	4,717	3,738	3,918	4,408	4,422	4,991
Total private ¹	3,526	2,481	2,325	4,314	3,360	3,399	4,107	4,159	4,730
Construction.....	140	57	44	335	243	248	331	466	511
Manufacturing.....	305	145	136	350	213	199	325	382	518
Trade, transportation, and utilities ²	667	562	474	970	800	800	981	948	951
Retail trade.....	358	386	305	693	560	544	686	629	607
Professional and business services.....	706	489	499	851	735	748	814	801	969
Education and health services.....	698	604	553	460	458	456	417	417	458
Leisure and hospitality ³	574	260	255	880	621	584	803	688	732
Accommodation and food services.....	514	224	225	713	530	500	697	598	585
Government ⁴	446	370	362	390	292	297	295	254	246
State and local government.....	398	350	338	326	256	273	256	226	229
	Rates (percent)								
Total ¹	2.8	2.1	1.9	3.4	2.7	2.9	3.2	3.3	3.7
Total private ¹	3.0	2.1	2.0	3.7	3.0	3.0	3.5	3.7	4.2
Construction.....	1.8	0.8	0.6	4.5	3.5	3.6	4.4	6.7	7.5
Manufacturing.....	2.2	1.1	1.0	2.5	1.6	1.5	2.4	2.9	4.0
Trade, transportation, and utilities ²	2.4	2.1	1.8	3.6	3.1	3.1	3.7	3.7	3.7
Retail trade.....	2.3	2.5	2.0	4.5	3.7	3.6	4.4	4.2	4.1
Professional and business services.....	3.7	2.7	2.8	4.7	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.6	5.6
Education and health services.....	3.6	3.1	2.8	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.2	2.2	2.4
Leisure and hospitality ³	4.0	1.9	1.9	6.4	4.6	4.3	5.9	5.1	5.4
Accommodation and food services.....	4.2	1.9	1.9	6.1	4.6	4.3	6.0	5.2	5.1
Government ⁴	2.0	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.1	1.1
State and local government.....	2.0	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.2

¹ Includes natural resources and mining, information, financial activities, and other services, not shown separately.

² Includes wholesale trade and transportation, warehousing, and utilities, not shown separately.

³ Includes arts, entertainment, and recreation, not shown separately.

⁴ Includes federal government, not shown separately.

^P = preliminary.

Over the 12 months ending in December, the job openings rate (not seasonally adjusted) did not rise significantly in any industry or region. The rate was essentially unchanged in six industries: natural resources and mining; retail trade; information; finance and insurance; real estate and rental and leasing; and other services. In the remaining 12 industries and at the total nonfarm and total private level, the job openings rate fell significantly over the year. Three of the four regions experienced a significant decline in the job openings rate over the year: Midwest, South, and West. (See table 5.)

Hires

Hires were essentially unchanged in December at 3.9 million but remain low, down 900,000, or 19 percent, from a year ago. The hires rate was 2.9 percent in December. No industry or region experienced a significant change in the hires rate in December. (See table 2.)

Over the 12 months ending in December, the hires rate did not increase significantly in any industry or region. The rate decreased over the past 12 months for total nonfarm and total private and in several industries, including durable goods manufacturing; nondurable goods manufacturing; retail trade; arts, entertainment, and recreation; accommodation and food services; federal government; and state and local government. In three of the four regions, the hires rate dropped significantly over the past 12 months: Northeast, South, and West. (See table 6.)

Separations

The total separations, or turnover, rate was higher in December than in November and higher than a year ago. The quits rate can serve as a barometer of workers' willingness or ability to change jobs. Although the quits rate was essentially unchanged in December at 1.5 percent, it remains at a low level last occurring in August 2003. Comparing December 2008 to December 2007, the quits rate was significantly lower for total nonfarm and total private and in many industries, including durable goods manufacturing; nondurable goods manufacturing; wholesale trade; retail trade; real estate and rental and leasing; arts, entertainment, and recreation; and accommodation and food services. Regionally, the quits rate fell over the year in three of the four regions: Midwest, South, and West. The quits rate did not rise significantly in the past 12 months in any industry or region. (See tables 4, 7, and 8.)

The other two components of total separations—layoffs and discharges, and other separations—are not seasonally adjusted. Layoffs and discharges are up substantially over the past 12 months. There were 2.8 million layoffs and discharges in December, which is a 58 percent increase from a year earlier. In the past 12 months, layoffs and discharges increased significantly in most industries, in all four regions, and for total nonfarm and total private. The layoffs and discharges rate fell significantly only for the federal government in the past 12 months. The other separations level was 262,000 in December, which is significantly lower than a year ago. (See tables 9 and 10.)

The total separations rate is driven by the relative contribution of its three components (quits, layoffs and discharges, and other separations), with quits contributing the largest portion. The percentage of total separations attributable to quits has varied over time and has been trending downward from a high of 61 percent in December 2006. Quits dropped to only 40 percent of total separations in December 2008, a new series low, as layoffs and discharges increased substantially. (See tables 3 and 4.)

For More Information

For additional information, please read the Technical Note or visit the JOLTS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/jlt/>. Additional information about JOLTS also may be obtained by e-mailing Joltsinfo@bls.gov or by calling (202) 691-5870.

The Job Openings and Labor Turnover release for January 2009 is scheduled to be issued on Tuesday, March 10, 2009.

Revisions to the JOLTS Data

With the release of January data on March 10, 2009, BLS will revise the job openings, hires, and separations data to incorporate the annual updates to the Current Employment Statistics employment estimates and the JOLTS seasonal adjustment factors. Unadjusted data from April 2007 forward and seasonally adjusted data from December 2000 forward are subject to revision. These revisions are in addition to the full series revisions due to methodology changes mentioned in the box note on page one of this release.

Technical Note

The data for the Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) are collected and compiled monthly from a sample of business establishments by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Collection

Each month, data are collected in a survey of business establishments for total employment, job openings, hires, quits, layoffs and discharges, and other separations. Data collection methods include computer-assisted telephone interviewing, touchtone data entry, fax, and mail.

Coverage

The JOLTS program covers all private nonfarm establishments such as factories, offices, and stores, as well as federal, state, and local government entities in the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Concepts

Industry classification. The industry classifications in this release are in accordance with the 2007 version of the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). In order to ensure the highest possible quality of data, State Workforce Agencies verify with employers and update, if necessary, the industry code, location, and ownership classification of all establishments on a 3-year cycle. Changes in establishment characteristics resulting from the verification process are always introduced into the JOLTS sampling frame with the data reported for the first month of the year.

Employment. Employment includes persons on the payroll who worked or received pay for the pay period that includes the 12th day of the reference month. Full-time, part-time, permanent, short-term, seasonal, salaried, and hourly employees are included, as are employees on paid vacations or other paid leave. Proprietors or partners of unincorporated businesses, unpaid family workers, or persons on leave without pay or on strike for the entire pay period, are not counted as employed. Employees of temporary help agencies, employee leasing companies, outside contractors, and consultants are counted by their employer of record, not by the establishment where they are working.

Job openings. Establishments submit job openings information for the last business day of the reference month. A job opening requires that: 1) a specific position exists and there is work available for that position, 2) work could start within 30 days regardless of whether a suitable candidate is found, and 3) the employer is actively recruiting from outside the establishment to fill the position. Included are full-time, part-time, permanent, short-term, and seasonal openings. Active recruiting means that the establishment is taking steps to fill a position by advertising in newspapers or on the Internet, posting help-wanted signs, accepting applications, or using other similar methods.

Jobs to be filled only by internal transfers, promotions, demotions, or recall from layoffs are excluded. Also excluded

are jobs with start dates more than 30 days in the future, jobs for which employees have been hired but have not yet reported for work, and jobs to be filled by employees of temporary help agencies, employee leasing companies, outside contractors, or consultants. The job openings rate is computed by dividing the number of job openings by the sum of employment and job openings and multiplying that quotient by 100.

Hires. Hires are the total number of additions to the payroll occurring at any time during the reference month, including both new and rehired employees, full-time and part-time, permanent, short-term, and seasonal employees, employees recalled to the location after a layoff lasting more than 7 days, on-call or intermittent employees who returned to work after having been formally separated, and transfers from other locations. The hires count does not include transfers or promotions within the reporting site, employees returning from strike, employees of temporary help agencies or employee leasing companies, outside contractors, or consultants. The hires rate is computed by dividing the number of hires by employment and multiplying that quotient by 100.

Separations. Separations are the total number of terminations of employment occurring at any time during the reference month, and are reported by type of separation—quits, layoffs and discharges, and other separations. Quits are voluntary separations by employees (except for retirements, which are reported as other separations). Layoffs and discharges are involuntary separations initiated by the employer and include layoffs with no intent to rehire, formal layoffs lasting or expected to last more than 7 days, discharges resulting from mergers, downsizing, or closings, firings or other discharges for cause, terminations of permanent or short-term employees, and terminations of seasonal employees. Other separations include retirements, transfers to other locations, deaths, and separations due to disability. Separations do not include transfers within the same location or employees on strike.

The separations rate is computed by dividing the number of separations by employment and multiplying that quotient by 100. The quits, layoffs and discharges, and other separations rates are computed similarly, dividing the number by employment and multiplying by 100.

Annual estimates. Annual estimates of rates and levels of hires, quits, layoffs and discharges, other separations, and total separations are released with the January news release each year.

The JOLTS annual level estimates for hires, quits, layoffs and discharges, other separations, and total separations are the sum of the 12 published monthly levels. The annual rate estimates are computed by dividing the annual level by the Current Employment Statistics (CES) annual average employment level, and multiplying that quotient by 100. This figure will be approximately equal to the sum of the 12 monthly rates. Note that both the JOLTS and CES annual levels are rounded to the nearest thousand before the annual estimates are calculated. Consistent with BLS practices, annual estimates will be published only for not seasonally adjusted data.

Annual estimates are not calculated for job openings because job openings are a stock, or point-in-time, measurement for the last business day of each month. Only jobs still open on the last day of the month are counted. For the same reason job openings cannot be cumulated throughout each month, annual figures for job openings cannot be created by summing the monthly estimates. Hires and separations are flow measures and are cumulated over the month with a total reported for the month. Therefore, the annual figures can be created by summing the monthly estimates.

Sample methodology

The JOLTS sample design is a random sample of 16,000 nonfarm business establishments, including factories, offices, and stores, as well as federal, state, and local governments in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The establishments are drawn from a universe of over eight million establishments compiled as part of the operations of the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, or QCEW, program. This program includes all employers subject to state Unemployment Insurance (UI) laws and federal agencies subject to Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE).

The sampling frame is stratified by ownership, region, industry sector, and size class. Large firms fall into the sample with virtual certainty. JOLTS total employment estimates are controlled to the employment estimates of the Current Employment Statistics (CES) survey. A ratio of CES to JOLTS employment is used to adjust the levels for all other JOLTS data elements. Rates are then computed from the adjusted levels.

Using JOLTS data

The JOLTS data series on job openings, hires, and separations are relatively new. The full sample is divided into panels, with one panel enrolled each month. A full complement of panels for the original data series based on the 1987 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system was not completely enrolled in the survey until January 2002. The supplemental panels of establishments needed to create NAICS estimates were not completely enrolled until May 2003. The data collected up until those points are from less than a full sample. Therefore, estimates from earlier months should be used with caution, as fewer sampled units were reporting data at that time.

In March 2002, BLS procedures for collecting hires and separations data were revised to address possible underreporting. As a result, JOLTS hires and separations estimates for months prior to March 2002 may not be comparable with estimates for March 2002 and later.

The federal government reorganization that involved transferring approximately 180,000 employees to the new Department of Homeland Security is not reflected in the JOLTS hires and separations estimates for the federal government. The Office of Personnel Management's record shows these transfers were completed in March 2003. The inclusion of

transfers in the JOLTS definitions of hires and separations is intended to cover ongoing movements of workers between establishments. The Department of Homeland Security reorganization was a massive one-time event, and the inclusion of these intergovernmental transfers would distort the federal government time series.

Seasonal adjustment

BLS seasonally adjusts several JOLTS series using the X-12-ARIMA seasonal adjustment program. Seasonal adjustment is the process of estimating and removing periodic fluctuations caused by events such as weather, holidays, and the beginning and ending of the school year. Seasonal adjustment makes it easier to observe fundamental changes in the level of the series, particularly those associated with general economic expansions and contractions. A concurrent seasonal adjustment methodology is used in which new seasonal adjustment factors are calculated each month, using all relevant data, up to and including the data for the current month.

Prior to the January 2007 benchmark release in March 2007, seasonal adjustment of the JOLTS series was conducted using the stable seasonal filter option since there were not enough data observations available for the standard use of moving averages as seasonal filters. Although the seasonal adjustment of the JOLTS series is conducted with fewer data observations than is customary, the number of observations is now above the minimum required by X-12 ARIMA to use the normal seasonal filters. Therefore, the standard use of moving averages as seasonal filters is now in place for JOLTS seasonal adjustment. JOLTS seasonal adjustment now includes both additive and multiplicative seasonal adjustment models and REGARIMA (regression with autocorrelated errors) modeling to improve the seasonal adjustment factors at the beginning and end of the series and to detect and adjust for outliers in the series.

Reliability of the estimates

JOLTS estimates are subject to both sampling and nonsampling error. When a sample rather than the entire population is surveyed, there is a chance that the sample estimates may differ from the "true" population values they represent. The exact difference, or sampling error, varies depending on the particular sample selected, and this variability is measured by the standard error of the estimate. BLS analysis is generally conducted at the 90-percent level of confidence. That means that there is a 90-percent chance, or level of confidence, that an estimate based on a sample will differ by no more than 1.6 standard errors from the "true" population value because of sampling error. Estimates of sampling errors are available upon request.

The JOLTS estimates also are affected by nonsampling error. Nonsampling error can occur for many reasons, including

the failure to include a segment of the population, the inability to obtain data from all units in the sample, the inability or unwillingness of respondents to provide data on a timely basis, mistakes made by respondents, errors made in the collection or processing of the data, and errors from the employment benchmark data used in estimation.

JOLTS hires and separations estimates cannot be used to exactly explain net changes in nonfarm payroll employment. Some reasons why it is problematic to compare changes in payroll employment with JOLTS hires and separations, especially on a monthly basis, are: 1) the reference period for payroll employment is the pay period including the 12th of the month, while the reference period for hires and separations is

the calendar month; and 2) payroll employment can vary from month to month simply because part-time and on-call workers may not always work during the pay period that includes the 12th of the month. Additionally, research has found that some reporters systematically underreport separations relative to hires due to a number of factors, including the nature of their payroll systems and practices. The shortfall appears to be about 2 percent or less over a 12-month period.

Other information

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone: 1-800-877-8339.

Table 1. Job openings levels ¹ and rates ² by industry and region, seasonally adjusted

Industry and region	Levels ³ (in thousands)							Rates						
	Dec. 2007	July 2008	Aug. 2008	Sept. 2008	Oct. 2008	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^p	Dec. 2007	July 2008	Aug. 2008	Sept. 2008	Oct. 2008	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^p
Total ⁴	3,974	3,492	3,375	3,214	3,001	2,855	2,692	2.8	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.1	2.1	1.9
INDUSTRY														
Total private ⁴	3,526	3,046	2,952	2,778	2,585	2,481	2,325	3.0	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.0
Construction.....	140	94	85	110	64	57	44	1.8	1.3	1.2	1.5	.9	.8	.6
Manufacturing.....	305	229	245	213	213	145	136	2.2	1.7	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.1	1.0
Trade, transportation, and utilities ⁵	667	569	572	458	507	562	474	2.4	2.1	2.1	1.7	1.9	2.1	1.8
Retail trade.....	358	346	357	260	316	386	305	2.3	2.2	2.3	1.7	2.0	2.5	2.0
Professional and business services.....	706	696	634	567	498	489	499	3.7	3.7	3.4	3.1	2.7	2.7	2.8
Education and health services.....	698	687	643	617	606	604	553	3.6	3.5	3.3	3.1	3.1	3.1	2.8
Leisure and hospitality ⁶	574	432	383	443	404	260	255	4.0	3.1	2.7	3.2	2.9	1.9	1.9
Accommodation and food services.....	514	388	316	373	351	224	225	4.2	3.2	2.6	3.1	2.9	1.9	1.9
Government ⁷	446	412	423	440	429	370	362	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.6	1.6
State and local government.....	398	362	363	387	367	350	338	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.7
REGION ⁸														
Northeast.....	644	615	617	590	541	495	545	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.1	1.9	2.1
South.....	1,574	1,384	1,317	1,240	1,191	1,128	1,071	3.1	2.7	2.6	2.4	2.4	2.2	2.1
Midwest.....	779	638	664	664	629	560	544	2.4	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.0	1.8	1.7
West.....	988	847	777	710	639	674	594	3.1	2.7	2.5	2.3	2.0	2.2	1.9

¹ Job openings are the number of job openings on the last business day of the month.

² The job openings rate is the number of job openings on the last business day of the month as a percent of total employment plus job openings.

³ Detail will not necessarily add to totals because of the independent seasonal adjustment of the various series.

⁴ Includes natural resources and mining, information, financial activities, and other services, not shown separately.

⁵ Includes wholesale trade and transportation, warehousing, and utilities, not shown separately.

⁶ Includes arts, entertainment, and recreation, not shown separately.

⁷ Includes federal government, not shown separately.

⁸ The States (including the District of Columbia) that comprise the regions are: Northeast: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont; South: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia; Midwest: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin; West: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

^p = preliminary.

Table 2. Hires levels ¹ and rates ² by industry and region, seasonally adjusted

Industry and region	Levels ³ (in thousands)							Rates						
	Dec. 2007	July 2008	Aug. 2008	Sept. 2008	Oct. 2008	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^p	Dec. 2007	July 2008	Aug. 2008	Sept. 2008	Oct. 2008	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^p
Total ⁴	4,717	4,026	4,063	4,362	4,155	3,738	3,918	3.4	2.9	3.0	3.2	3.0	2.7	2.9
INDUSTRY														
Total private ⁴	4,314	3,751	3,822	4,090	3,852	3,360	3,399	3.7	3.3	3.3	3.6	3.4	3.0	3.0
Construction.....	335	242	322	288	334	243	248	4.5	3.4	4.5	4.0	4.7	3.5	3.6
Manufacturing.....	350	249	251	281	257	213	199	2.5	1.8	1.9	2.1	1.9	1.6	1.5
Trade, transportation, and utilities ⁵	970	858	878	875	837	800	800	3.6	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.1
Retail trade.....	693	585	619	616	565	560	544	4.5	3.8	4.0	4.0	3.7	3.7	3.6
Professional and business services.....	851	748	701	741	748	735	748	4.7	4.2	3.9	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.3
Education and health services.....	460	474	509	514	512	458	456	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.4	2.4
Leisure and hospitality ⁶	880	798	728	830	734	621	584	6.4	5.8	5.3	6.1	5.4	4.6	4.3
Accommodation and food services.....	713	683	626	681	602	530	500	6.1	5.9	5.4	5.9	5.2	4.6	4.3
Government ⁷	390	321	315	313	322	292	297	1.7	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3
State and local government.....	326	300	286	283	278	256	273	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.4
REGION ⁸														
Northeast.....	770	657	679	688	629	530	609	3.0	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.1	2.4
South.....	1,802	1,512	1,549	1,570	1,516	1,396	1,328	3.6	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.1	2.8	2.7
Midwest.....	1,045	934	926	1,020	973	842	875	3.3	3.0	2.9	3.3	3.1	2.7	2.8
West.....	1,067	979	1,004	1,057	975	887	865	3.4	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.2	2.9	2.8

¹ Hires are the number of hires during the entire month.

² The hires rate is the number of hires during the entire month as a percent of total employment.

³ Detail will not necessarily add to totals because of the independent seasonal adjustment of the various series.

⁴ Includes natural resources and mining, information, financial activities, and other services, not shown separately.

⁵ Includes wholesale trade and transportation, warehousing, and utilities, not shown separately.

⁶ Includes arts, entertainment, and recreation, not shown separately.

⁷ Includes federal government, not shown separately.

⁸ See footnote 8, table 1.

^p = preliminary.

Table 3. Total separations levels ¹ and rates ² by industry and region, seasonally adjusted

Industry and region	Levels ³ (in thousands)							Rates						
	Dec. 2007	July 2008	Aug. 2008	Sept. 2008	Oct. 2008	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^P	Dec. 2007	July 2008	Aug. 2008	Sept. 2008	Oct. 2008	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^P
Total ⁴	4,408	4,359	4,398	4,042	4,299	4,422	4,991	3.2	3.2	3.2	2.9	3.1	3.3	3.7
INDUSTRY														
Total private ⁴	4,107	4,128	4,149	3,792	4,034	4,159	4,730	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.3	3.5	3.7	4.2
Construction.....	331	473	400	403	418	466	511	4.4	6.6	5.6	5.7	5.9	6.7	7.5
Manufacturing.....	325	324	325	335	424	382	518	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.5	3.2	2.9	4.0
Trade, transportation, and utilities ⁵	981	1,013	933	916	945	948	951	3.7	3.8	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.7
Retail trade.....	686	692	642	581	634	629	607	4.4	4.5	4.2	3.8	4.2	4.2	4.1
Professional and business services.....	814	694	851	696	771	801	969	4.5	3.9	4.8	3.9	4.4	4.6	5.6
Education and health services.....	417	464	424	378	427	417	458	2.2	2.4	2.2	2.0	2.2	2.2	2.4
Leisure and hospitality ⁶	803	741	754	714	671	688	732	5.9	5.4	5.5	5.2	4.9	5.1	5.4
Accommodation and food services.....	697	629	652	634	559	598	585	6.0	5.4	5.6	5.5	4.8	5.2	5.1
Government ⁷	295	244	257	251	264	254	246	1.3	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.1
State and local government.....	256	222	231	233	234	226	229	1.3	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.2
REGION ⁸														
Northeast.....	635	745	705	600	607	677	842	2.5	2.9	2.7	2.3	2.4	2.7	3.3
South.....	1,712	1,629	1,633	1,456	1,564	1,670	1,741	3.4	3.3	3.3	2.9	3.2	3.4	3.6
Midwest.....	980	912	893	956	1,003	981	1,052	3.1	2.9	2.8	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.4
West.....	1,117	1,099	1,142	1,017	1,123	1,131	1,237	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.3	3.7	3.7	4.1

¹ Total separations are the number of total separations during the entire month.

² The total separations rate is the number of total separations during the entire month as a percent of total employment.

³ Detail will not necessarily add to totals because of the independent seasonal adjustment of the various series.

⁴ Includes natural resources and mining, information, financial activities,

and other services, not shown separately.

⁵ Includes wholesale trade and transportation, warehousing, and utilities, not shown separately.

⁶ Includes arts, entertainment, and recreation, not shown separately.

⁷ Includes federal government, not shown separately.

⁸ See footnote 8, table 1.

^P = preliminary.

Table 4. Quits levels ¹ and rates ² by industry and region, seasonally adjusted

Industry and region	Levels ³ (in thousands)							Rates						
	Dec. 2007	July 2008	Aug. 2008	Sept. 2008	Oct. 2008	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^P	Dec. 2007	July 2008	Aug. 2008	Sept. 2008	Oct. 2008	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^P
Total ⁴	2,494	2,314	2,252	2,144	2,135	1,965	2,000	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.4	1.5
INDUSTRY														
Total private ⁴	2,358	2,209	2,134	2,032	2,020	1,868	1,883	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.6	1.7
Construction.....	119	157	150	118	108	97	105	1.6	2.2	2.1	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.5
Manufacturing.....	182	134	143	141	156	128	107	1.3	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.0	.8
Trade, transportation, and utilities ⁵	590	545	485	494	488	457	473	2.2	2.1	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.8
Retail trade.....	445	405	355	351	340	325	346	2.9	2.6	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.3
Professional and business services.....	367	363	352	317	373	319	314	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.8	2.1	1.8	1.8
Education and health services.....	258	268	234	234	259	227	237	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.2	1.2
Leisure and hospitality ⁶	561	499	482	485	450	421	410	4.1	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.3	3.1	3.0
Accommodation and food services.....	513	452	445	423	416	391	384	4.4	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.6	3.4	3.3
Government ⁷	137	111	121	120	116	108	119	.6	.5	.5	.5	.5	.5	.5
State and local government.....	120	104	113	121	107	100	112	.6	.5	.6	.6	.5	.5	.6
REGION ⁸														
Northeast.....	312	341	306	279	286	267	289	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
South.....	1,008	930	912	821	837	805	769	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.6
Midwest.....	521	504	513	531	524	443	439	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.4	1.4
West.....	632	541	518	492	493	449	487	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.6

¹ Quits are the number of quits during the entire month.

² The quits rate is the number of quits during the entire month as a percent of total employment.

³ Detail will not necessarily add to totals because of the independent seasonal adjustment of the various series.

⁴ Includes natural resources and mining, information, financial activities, and other services, not shown separately.

⁵ Includes wholesale trade and transportation, warehousing, and utilities, not shown separately.

⁶ Includes arts, entertainment, and recreation, not shown separately.

⁷ Includes federal government, not shown separately.

⁸ See footnote 8, table 1.

^P = preliminary.

Table 5. Job openings levels ¹ and rates ² by industry and region, not seasonally adjusted

Industry and region	Levels (in thousands)			Rates		
	Dec. 2007	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^p	Dec. 2007	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^p
Total	3,529	2,608	2,361	2.5	1.9	1.7
INDUSTRY						
Total private.....	3,120	2,260	2,031	2.6	1.9	1.8
Natural resources and mining.....	13	10	13	1.8	1.3	1.6
Construction.....	102	45	31	1.4	.6	.5
Manufacturing.....	274	128	119	1.9	1.0	.9
Durable goods.....	152	70	62	1.7	.8	.8
Nondurable goods.....	122	58	57	2.4	1.2	1.2
Trade, transportation, and utilities.....	563	514	357	2.0	1.9	1.3
Wholesale trade.....	152	69	67	2.4	1.1	1.1
Retail trade.....	285	383	232	1.7	2.4	1.5
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities.....	125	62	57	2.4	1.2	1.1
Information.....	68	65	42	2.2	2.1	1.4
Financial activities.....	198	141	179	2.3	1.7	2.2
Finance and insurance.....	155	103	140	2.5	1.7	2.3
Real estate and rental and leasing.....	43	37	39	2.0	1.8	1.8
Professional and business services.....	653	443	453	3.5	2.4	2.5
Education and health services.....	670	577	520	3.4	2.9	2.6
Educational services.....	57	52	40	1.8	1.6	1.2
Health care and social assistance.....	613	525	480	3.8	3.2	2.9
Leisure and hospitality.....	465	226	201	3.4	1.7	1.5
Arts, entertainment, and recreation.....	44	28	21	2.3	1.5	1.1
Accommodation and food services.....	421	198	180	3.5	1.7	1.6
Other services.....	115	113	116	2.0	2.0	2.1
Government.....	409	348	330	1.8	1.5	1.4
Federal.....	45	18	23	1.6	.7	.8
State and local.....	364	329	307	1.8	1.6	1.5
REGION ³						
Northeast.....	554	459	476	2.1	1.8	1.8
South.....	1,407	1,032	943	2.7	2.0	1.9
Midwest.....	683	485	466	2.1	1.5	1.5
West.....	884	633	475	2.8	2.0	1.5

¹ Job openings are the number of job openings on the last business day of the month.

² The job openings rate is the number of job openings on the last business day of the month as a percent of total employment plus job openings.

³ See footnote 8, table 1.

^p = preliminary.

Table 6. Hires levels ¹ and rates ² by industry and region, not seasonally adjusted

Industry and region	Levels (in thousands)			Rates		
	Dec. 2007	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^p	Dec. 2007	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^p
Total	3,462	3,267	2,674	2.5	2.4	2.0
INDUSTRY						
Total private.....	3,229	3,067	2,499	2.8	2.7	2.2
Natural resources and mining.....	17	18	15	2.3	2.2	1.8
Construction.....	208	184	148	2.8	2.6	2.2
Manufacturing.....	232	174	129	1.7	1.3	1.0
Durable goods.....	130	89	70	1.5	1.1	.9
Nondurable goods.....	101	85	59	2.0	1.7	1.2
Trade, transportation, and utilities.....	785	882	645	2.9	3.3	2.4
Wholesale trade.....	107	103	99	1.7	1.7	1.7
Retail trade.....	564	693	444	3.5	4.5	2.9
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities.....	115	85	102	2.2	1.7	2.0
Information.....	38	44	40	1.2	1.5	1.4
Financial activities.....	145	126	106	1.8	1.6	1.3
Finance and insurance.....	99	95	73	1.6	1.6	1.2
Real estate and rental and leasing.....	46	32	32	2.2	1.5	1.6
Professional and business services.....	663	674	563	3.6	3.8	3.2
Education and health services.....	335	376	320	1.8	2.0	1.7
Educational services.....	37	35	25	1.2	1.1	.8
Health care and social assistance.....	298	341	295	1.9	2.1	1.8
Leisure and hospitality.....	680	509	426	5.1	3.9	3.2
Arts, entertainment, and recreation.....	147	65	70	7.9	3.6	3.8
Accommodation and food services.....	532	444	356	4.6	3.9	3.1
Other services.....	128	81	108	2.3	1.5	2.0
Government.....	233	200	175	1.0	.9	.8
Federal.....	50	18	21	1.8	.6	.7
State and local.....	183	182	155	.9	.9	.8
REGION ³						
Northeast.....	575	475	449	2.2	1.9	1.8
South.....	1,317	1,252	954	2.6	2.5	1.9
Midwest.....	726	729	607	2.3	2.3	2.0
West.....	844	811	665	2.7	2.6	2.2

¹ Hires are the number of hires during the entire month.

² The hires rate is the number of hires during the entire month as a percent of total employment.

³ See footnote 8, table 1.

^p = preliminary.

Table 7. Total separations levels ¹ and rates ² by industry and region, not seasonally adjusted

Industry and region	Levels (in thousands)			Rates		
	Dec. 2007	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^p	Dec. 2007	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^p
Total	4,220	4,131	4,745	3.0	3.0	3.5
INDUSTRY						
Total private.....	3,977	3,960	4,544	3.4	3.5	4.0
Natural resources and mining.....	26	31	33	3.5	3.8	4.1
Construction.....	363	486	573	4.9	6.9	8.6
Manufacturing.....	280	365	451	2.0	2.8	3.5
Durable goods.....	149	226	285	1.7	2.7	3.5
Nondurable goods.....	131	139	166	2.6	2.8	3.4
Trade, transportation, and utilities.....	1,093	910	1,067	4.0	3.5	4.0
Wholesale trade.....	196	131	184	3.2	2.2	3.1
Retail trade.....	786	610	684	4.9	4.0	4.4
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities.....	112	169	199	2.2	3.4	4.0
Information.....	49	60	53	1.6	2.0	1.8
Financial activities.....	202	189	144	2.4	2.3	1.8
Finance and insurance.....	117	113	101	1.9	1.9	1.7
Real estate and rental and leasing.....	85	76	43	4.0	3.7	2.1
Professional and business services.....	797	818	990	4.4	4.6	5.7
Education and health services.....	346	329	395	1.8	1.7	2.0
Educational services.....	41	37	49	1.3	1.1	1.5
Health care and social assistance.....	304	292	346	1.9	1.8	2.2
Leisure and hospitality.....	683	657	637	5.1	5.0	4.8
Arts, entertainment, and recreation.....	78	101	128	4.2	5.5	7.0
Accommodation and food services.....	605	555	509	5.3	4.9	4.5
Other services.....	140	117	201	2.5	2.1	3.7
Government.....	243	171	201	1.1	.7	.9
Federal.....	43	12	23	1.6	.4	.8
State and local.....	201	158	179	1.0	.8	.9
REGION ³						
Northeast.....	620	619	834	2.4	2.4	3.3
South.....	1,557	1,442	1,624	3.1	2.9	3.3
Midwest.....	974	1,002	1,106	3.1	3.2	3.6
West.....	1,068	1,068	1,181	3.4	3.5	3.9

¹ Total separations are the number of total separations during the entire month.

² The total separations rate is the number of total separations during the entire month as a percent of total employment.

³ See footnote 8, table 1.

^p = preliminary.

Table 8. Quits levels ¹ and rates ² by industry and region, not seasonally adjusted

Industry and region	Levels (in thousands)			Rates		
	Dec. 2007	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^p	Dec. 2007	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^p
Total	2,075	1,683	1,640	1.5	1.2	1.2
INDUSTRY						
Total private.....	1,977	1,607	1,552	1.7	1.4	1.4
Natural resources and mining.....	12	11	11	1.6	1.4	1.3
Construction.....	93	71	75	1.3	1.0	1.1
Manufacturing.....	131	102	76	.9	.8	.6
Durable goods.....	68	58	44	.8	.7	.5
Nondurable goods.....	62	44	31	1.2	.9	.7
Trade, transportation, and utilities.....	541	411	438	2.0	1.6	1.7
Wholesale trade.....	73	49	46	1.2	.8	.8
Retail trade.....	414	304	329	2.6	2.0	2.1
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities.....	54	58	63	1.1	1.2	1.3
Information.....	28	21	19	.9	.7	.7
Financial activities.....	92	77	53	1.1	1.0	.7
Finance and insurance.....	46	52	44	.8	.9	.7
Real estate and rental and leasing.....	46	25	10	2.1	1.2	.5
Professional and business services.....	310	291	254	1.7	1.6	1.5
Education and health services.....	215	188	198	1.1	1.0	1.0
Educational services.....	20	14	13	.7	.4	.4
Health care and social assistance.....	195	174	185	1.2	1.1	1.1
Leisure and hospitality.....	469	375	329	3.5	2.8	2.5
Arts, entertainment, and recreation.....	40	20	19	2.1	1.1	1.0
Accommodation and food services.....	429	354	310	3.7	3.1	2.7
Other services.....	86	60	99	1.6	1.1	1.8
Government.....	98	77	87	.4	.3	.4
Federal.....	10	3	5	.4	.1	.2
State and local.....	88	74	82	.4	.4	.4
REGION ³						
Northeast.....	248	238	232	1.0	.9	.9
South.....	839	664	624	1.7	1.3	1.3
Midwest.....	436	399	357	1.4	1.3	1.1
West.....	552	383	426	1.8	1.2	1.4

¹ Quits are the number of quits during the entire month.

² The quits rate is the number of quits during the entire month as a percent of total employment.

³ See footnote 8, table 1.

^p = preliminary.

Table 9. Layoffs and discharges levels ¹ and rates ² by industry and region, not seasonally adjusted

Industry and region	Levels (in thousands)			Rates		
	Dec. 2007	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^P	Dec. 2007	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^P
Total	1,802	2,161	2,844	1.3	1.6	2.1
INDUSTRY						
Total private.....	1,713	2,097	2,765	1.5	1.8	2.4
Natural resources and mining.....	11	19	21	1.4	2.3	2.6
Construction.....	246	396	481	3.3	5.6	7.2
Manufacturing.....	129	242	355	.9	1.8	2.7
Durable goods.....	69	154	230	.8	1.9	2.8
Nondurable goods.....	60	88	126	1.2	1.8	2.6
Trade, transportation, and utilities.....	451	423	560	1.7	1.6	2.1
Wholesale trade.....	98	75	134	1.6	1.3	2.3
Retail trade.....	312	259	317	1.9	1.7	2.0
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities.....	41	89	110	.8	1.8	2.2
Information.....	15	35	21	.5	1.2	.7
Financial activities.....	88	83	81	1.1	1.0	1.0
Finance and insurance.....	51	34	50	.8	.6	.8
Real estate and rental and leasing.....	37	49	31	1.7	2.3	1.5
Professional and business services.....	438	491	696	2.4	2.8	4.0
Education and health services.....	94	100	168	.5	.5	.9
Educational services.....	19	20	34	.6	.6	1.1
Health care and social assistance.....	76	80	135	.5	.5	.8
Leisure and hospitality.....	193	259	295	1.4	2.0	2.2
Arts, entertainment, and recreation.....	35	77	108	1.9	4.2	5.9
Accommodation and food services.....	157	182	187	1.4	1.6	1.7
Other services.....	49	50	87	.9	.9	1.6
Government.....	89	64	79	.4	.3	.3
Federal.....	22	5	12	.8	.2	.4
State and local.....	67	60	66	.3	.3	.3
REGION ³						
Northeast.....	295	315	540	1.1	1.2	2.1
South.....	621	684	911	1.2	1.4	1.9
Midwest.....	461	554	691	1.5	1.8	2.2
West.....	426	609	702	1.4	2.0	2.3

¹ Layoffs and discharges are the number of layoffs and discharges during the entire month.

² The layoffs and discharges rate is the number of layoffs and discharges during the entire month as a percent of total employment.

³ See footnote 8, table 1.

^P = preliminary.

Table 10. Other separations levels ¹ and rates ² by industry and region, not seasonally adjusted

Industry and region	Levels (in thousands)			Rates		
	Dec. 2007	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^p	Dec. 2007	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008 ^p
Total	342	287	262	0.2	0.2	0.2
INDUSTRY						
Total private.....	287	257	226	.2	.2	.2
Natural resources and mining.....	4	1	1	.5	.1	.2
Construction.....	23	19	17	.3	.3	.3
Manufacturing.....	21	21	20	.1	.2	.2
Durable goods.....	12	14	12	.1	.2	.1
Nondurable goods.....	9	7	8	.2	.1	.2
Trade, transportation, and utilities.....	101	76	68	.4	.3	.3
Wholesale trade.....	25	7	5	.4	.1	.1
Retail trade.....	60	47	37	.4	.3	.2
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities.....	17	22	26	.3	.4	.5
Information.....	6	5	13	.2	.2	.4
Financial activities.....	21	29	10	.3	.4	.1
Finance and insurance.....	20	26	7	.3	.4	.1
Real estate and rental and leasing.....	2	2	3	.1	.1	.1
Professional and business services.....	49	35	40	.3	.2	.2
Education and health services.....	36	41	28	.2	.2	.1
Educational services.....	2	2	1	.1	.1	(⁴)
Health care and social assistance.....	34	39	27	.2	.2	.2
Leisure and hospitality.....	21	23	13	.2	.2	.1
Arts, entertainment, and recreation.....	3	4	1	.2	.2	.1
Accommodation and food services.....	19	19	12	.2	.2	.1
Other services.....	5	7	15	.1	.1	.3
Government.....	56	30	35	.2	.1	.2
Federal.....	10	5	5	.4	.2	.2
State and local.....	45	25	30	.2	.1	.1
REGION ³						
Northeast.....	77	67	62	.3	.3	.2
South.....	98	94	88	.2	.2	.2
Midwest.....	77	50	59	.2	.2	.2
West.....	90	76	53	.3	.2	.2

¹ Other separations are the number of other separations during the entire month.

² The other separations rate is the number of other separations during the entire month as a percent of total employment.

³ See footnote 8, table 1.

⁴ Data round to zero.

^p = preliminary.