



# **Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey**

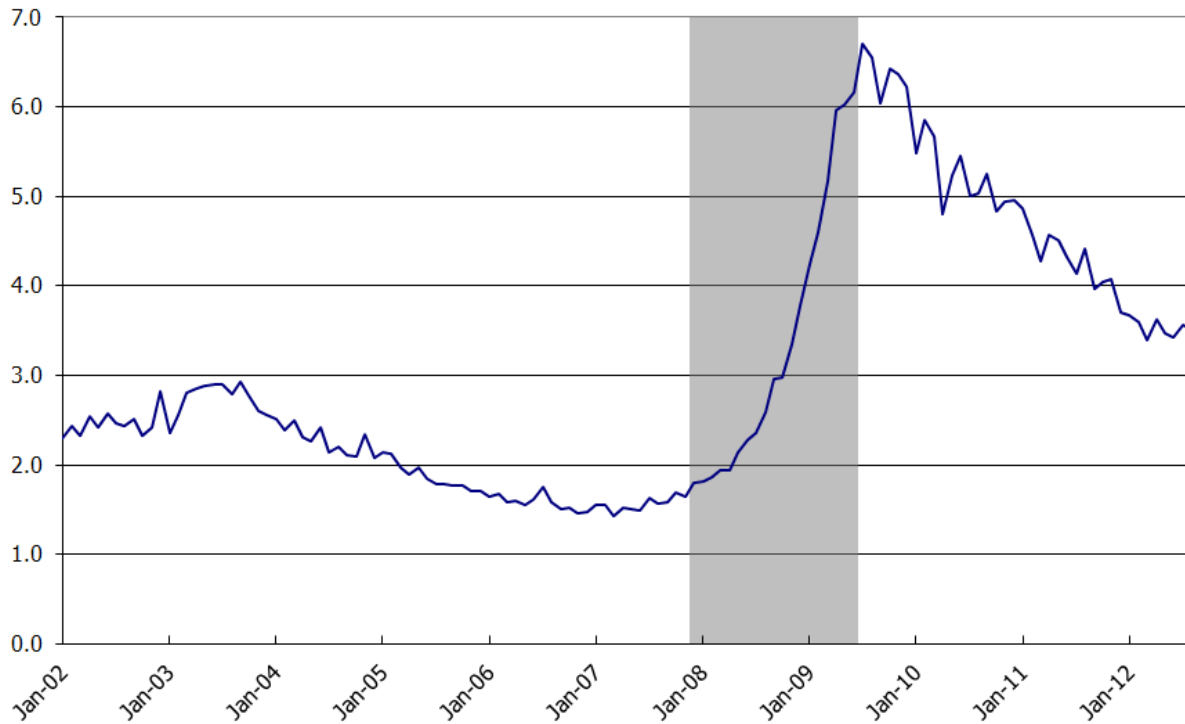
## **Highlights**

**August 2012**

Bureau of Labor Statistics

October 10, 2012

**Chart 1. Number of unemployed persons per job opening  
Seasonally adjusted**

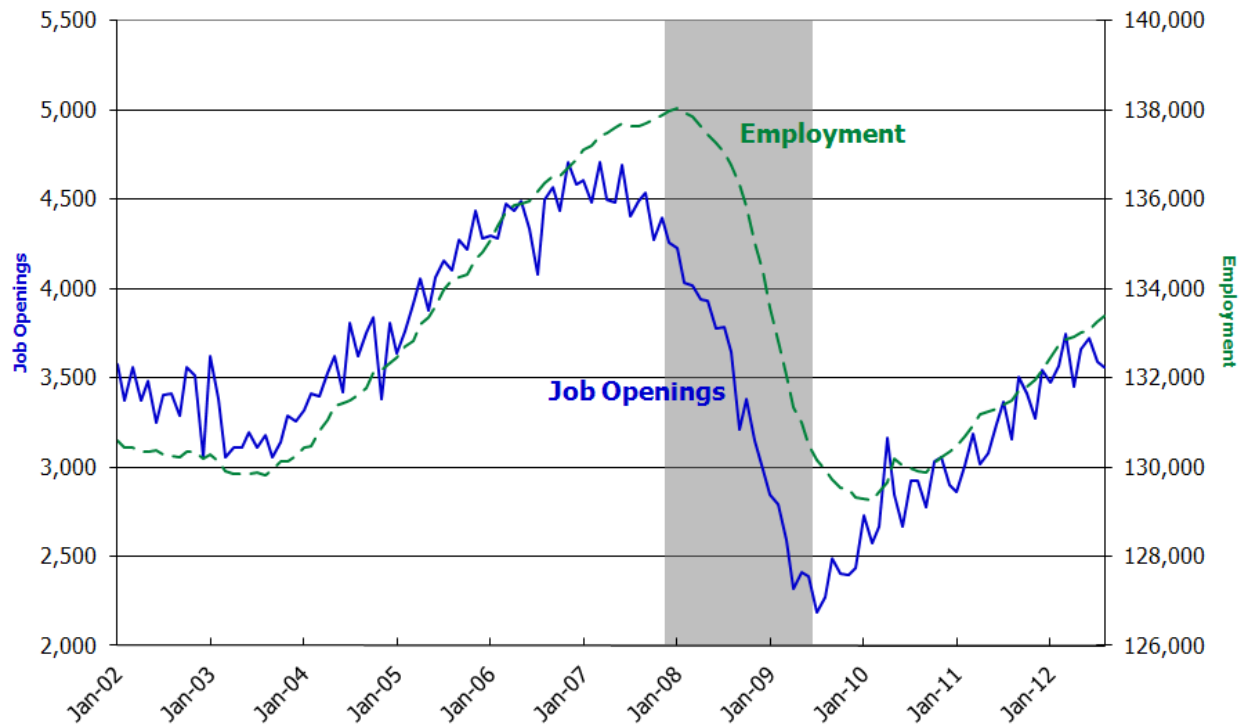


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey and Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, October 10, 2012.

Note: Shaded area represents recession as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER).

- The ratio between the unemployment level and job openings level changes over time.
- When the most recent recession began (December 2007), the number of unemployed persons per job opening was 1.8. When the recession ended (June 2009), there were 6.2 unemployed persons per job opening.
- The unemployed persons per job opening ratio has trended downward since the end of the recession and was 3.5 in August 2012.

**Chart 2. Job openings and employment  
Seasonally adjusted, in thousands**

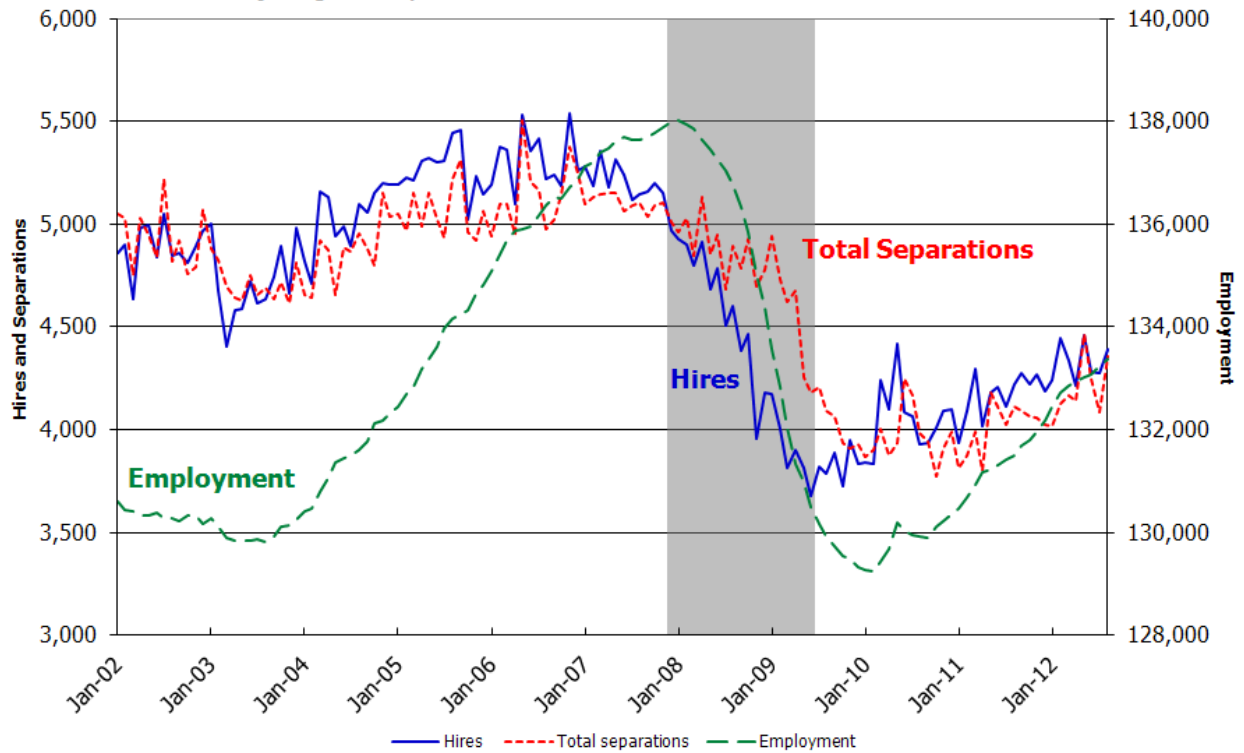


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics and Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, October 10, 2012.

Note: Shaded area represents recession as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER).

- The number of job openings declined to a series low in July 2009, one month after the official end of the recent recession. Employment continued to decline after the end of the recession, reaching a low point in February 2010.
- In August 2012, there were 3.6 million job openings, which was 63 percent higher than the series low in July 2009. The level was still well below the 4.7 million openings at the peak in March 2007.

**Chart 3. Hires, total separations, and employment**  
**Seasonally adjusted, in thousands**

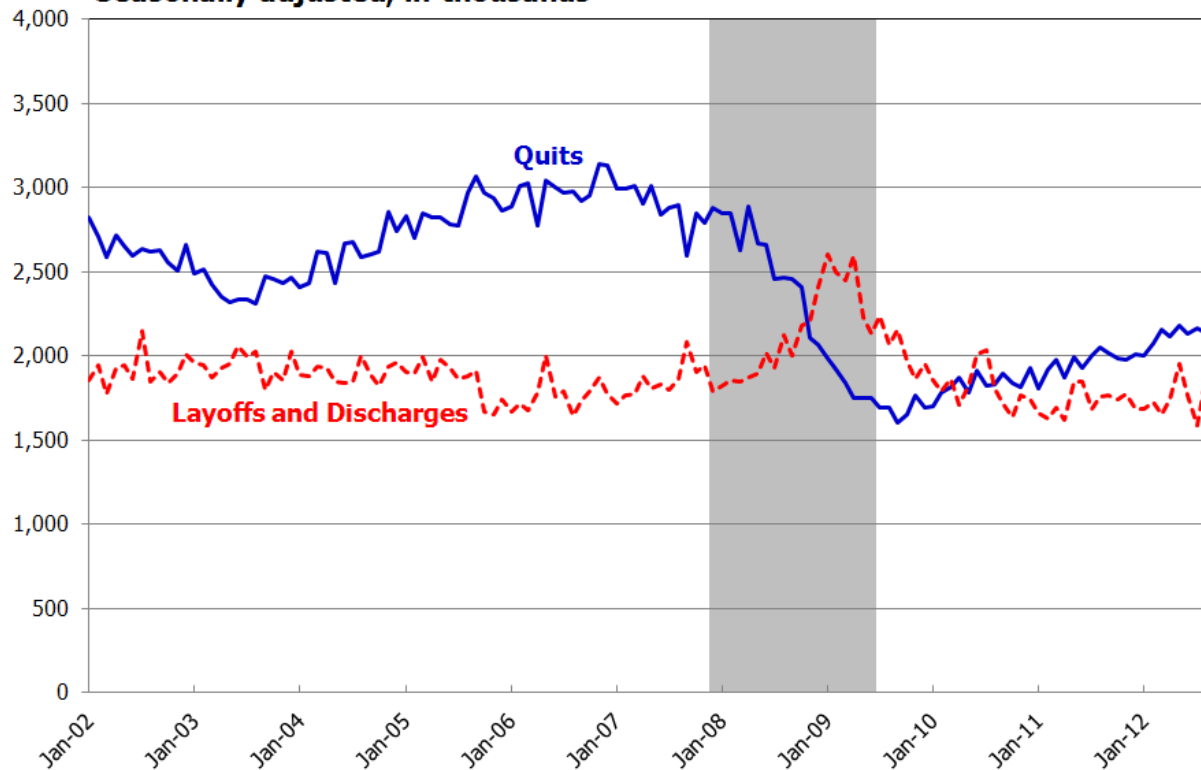


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics and Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, October 10, 2012.

Note: Shaded area represents recession as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER).

- Hires, total separations, and employment all remained below pre-recession levels in August 2012.
- In August, there were 4.4 million hires, which was 19 percent higher than the trough in June 2009.
- There were 4.4 million total separations in August.

**Chart 4. Quits and layoffs and discharges**  
**Seasonally adjusted, in thousands**

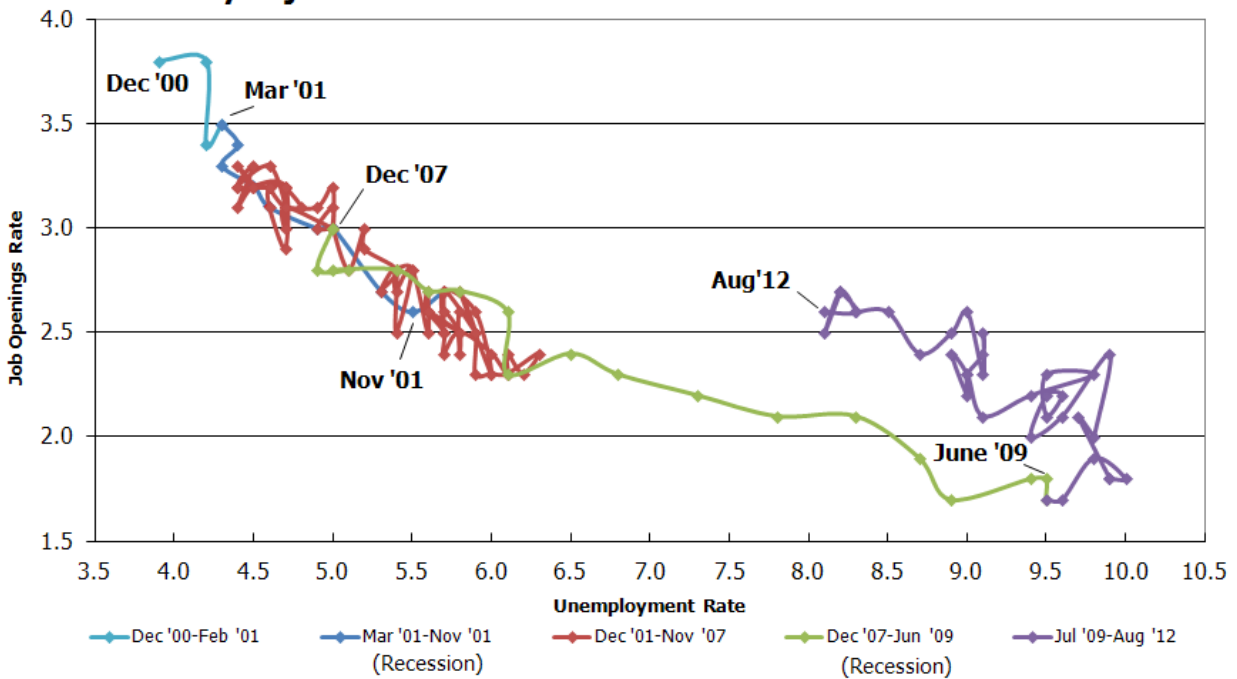


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, October 10, 2012.

Note: Shaded area represents recession as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER).

- Quits are generally voluntary separations initiated by the employee. Therefore, the quits rate can serve as a measure of workers' willingness or ability to leave jobs.
- The number of quits has exceeded the number of layoffs and discharges for most of the 11-year JOLTS history. During the latest recession, this relationship changed as layoffs and discharges outnumbered quits from November 2008 through March 2010.
- In August 2012, there were 2.1 million quits, still well below the 2.9 million quits in December 2007, the first month of the recession.
- The number of layoffs and discharges for total nonfarm was 1.8 million in August, down from a peak of 2.6 million in January 2009.

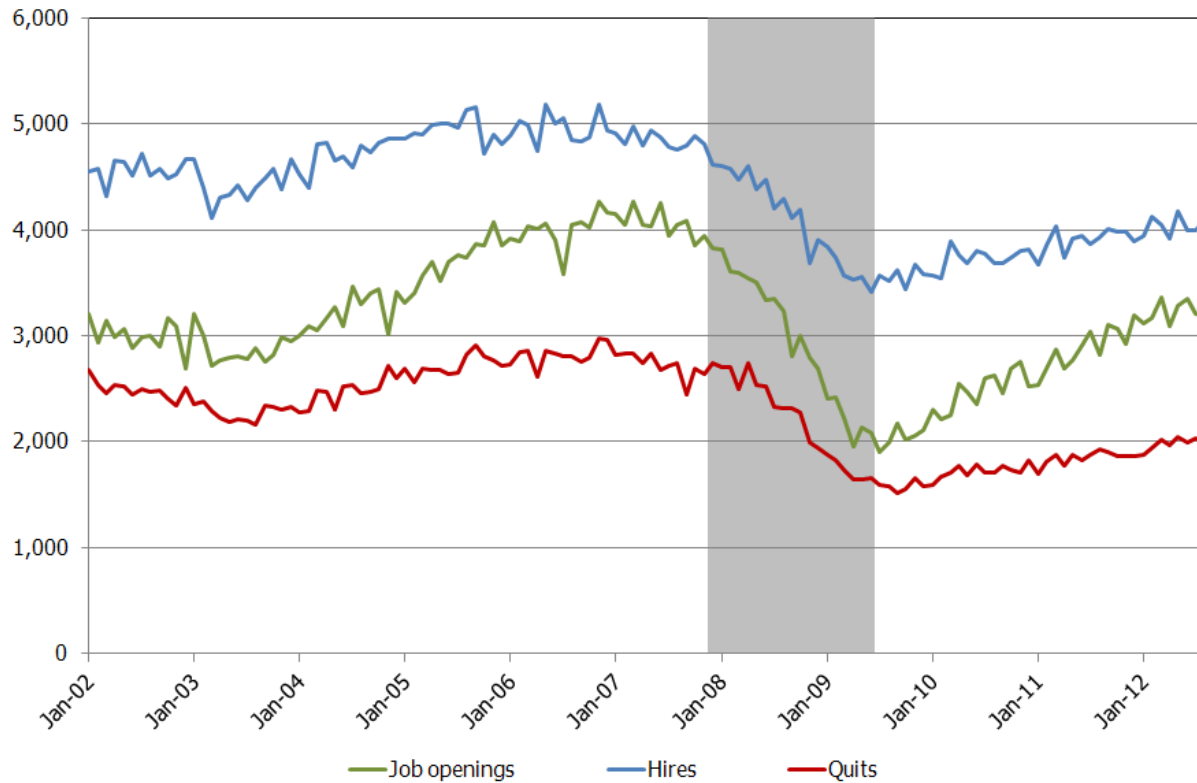
**Chart 5. The Beveridge Curve (job openings vs. unemployment rate)  
Seasonally adjusted**



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey and Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, October 10, 2012.

- This graph plots the job openings rate against the unemployment rate. This graphical representation is known as the Beveridge Curve, named after the British economist William Henry Beveridge (1879-1963). The economy's position on the downward sloping Beveridge Curve reflects the state of the business cycle.
- During an expansion, the unemployment rate is low and the job openings rate is high. Conversely, during a contraction, the unemployment rate is high and the job openings rate is low. The position of the curve is determined by the efficiency of the labor market. For example, a greater mismatch between available jobs and the unemployed in terms of skills or location would cause the curve to shift outward, up and toward the right.
- From the start of the recent recession in December 2007 through the end of 2009, each month's point on the curve moved lower and further to the right as the job openings rate declined and the unemployment rate rose. In 2010 and 2011, the point moved up and to the left as the job openings rate increased and the unemployment rate decreased.
- In August 2012, the job openings rate was 2.6 percent and the unemployment rate was 8.1 percent.

**Chart 6. Total private job openings, hires, and quits**  
Seasonally adjusted, in thousands

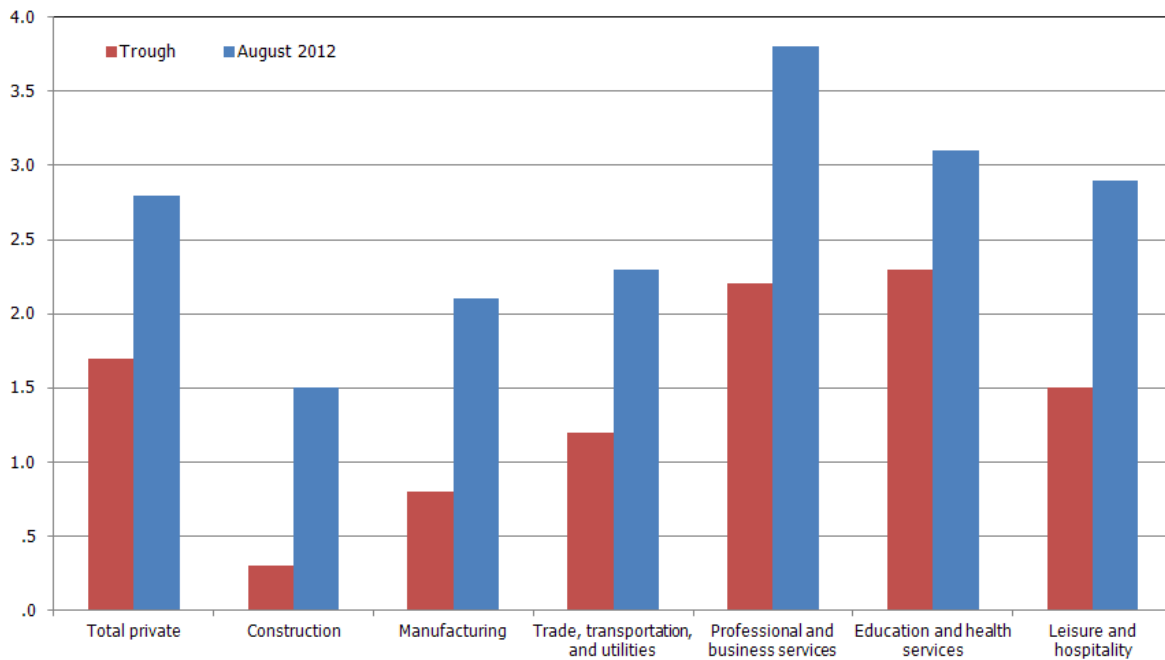


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, October 10, 2012.

Note: Shaded area represents recession as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER).

- Since reaching their respective post-recession troughs, the number of job openings has steadily increased and the number of hires and quits have increased slightly.
- Job openings in the private sector decreased steeply during the recession, falling from 3.8 million in December 2007 (the beginning of the recession) to a low of 1.9 million in July 2009. Since the trough in July 2009, the number of openings has increased by 68 percent, reaching 3.2 million in August 2012.
- Hires in the private sector also fell throughout the recession, although less steeply than job openings, falling from 4.6 million in December 2007 to a low of 3.4 million in June 2009. Since the trough, the number of hires has increased by 20 percent to 4.1 million in August 2012.
- Quits in the private sector also declined during the recession, starting at 2.7 million in December 2007 and reaching a low of 1.5 million in September 2009. Since the trough, the number of quits has increased by 32 percent, to 2.0 million in August 2012.

**Chart 7. Job openings rates by industry, trough vs. August 2012  
Seasonally adjusted**



Date of trough	July 2009	April 2009	May 2009	July 2009	August 2009	August 2010	August 2009
Change from trough to Aug. 2012	65%	400%	163%	92%	73%	35%	93%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, October 10, 2012.

Note: Each industry's trough is tested using levels. Once a trough was determined the rate from that month was used in this chart.

- The total private job openings rate has been trending upward since the trough in July 2009.
- Each industry was affected by the recession in different ways and to different degrees. The number of job openings for each industry reached a low point (trough) at a different time, all between April 2009 and August 2010. The recovery from the recession has also been different across industries.
- Since their troughs, the job openings rate for construction and manufacturing have risen the most, 400 percent and 163 percent, respectively.
- The industry with the smallest rise in the job openings rate since its trough is education and health services (up 35 percent).