

**Supporting Statement for Requests for OMB Approval
Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS)**

A. Justification

1. Necessity of Collection:

The Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) collects data on job vacancies, labor hires, and labor separations. The data can be used as demand-side indicators of labor shortages. These indicators of labor shortages at the national level will greatly enhance policy makers' understanding of imbalances between the demand for and supply of labor. Presently there is no other economic indicator of the demand for labor with which to assess the presence of labor shortages in the U.S. labor market. The availability of unfilled jobs - the number of job vacancies or the vacancy rate - is an important measure of tightness of job markets, parallel to existing measures of unemployment.

JOLTS statistics reveal structural labor market conditions, such as the effectiveness of job matching and training processes, the implications of unemployment insurance and welfare, and deficient demand for labor.

JOLTS statistics can be used as a potential indicator of business cycles. In addition, JOLTS statistics allow businesses to compare their turnover rates to national rates.

Title 29, chapter 1, part 2 of United States Code authorizes JOLTS data collection.

2. Description of the Information Collected:

The information is collected once a month at the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Atlanta Data Collection Center (DCC), Atlanta, Georgia. Data is collected from the private sector, State and local governments, and the Federal Government. It is collected using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI), web reporting, email, and fax. For the next survey round, an establishment will be in the sample for 24 months, which is unchanged from the previous round.

Upon receiving the selected sample, the sample units are distributed among the Atlanta DCC interviewers. The interviewer then conducts address refinement. Address refinement requires interviewers to confirm correct contact information for an establishment. Once this has been done, the enrollment package is printed and mailed to the respondent. During the first six months of collection, the interviewer calls the respondent and conducts the interview over the phone using CATI. The first month includes clarification on the reporting unit. During the sixth month interview, the interviewer prepares the respondent for rollover to web, email, or fax. Each respondent is encouraged to report all remaining months of data using web reporting.

There are 6 data elements collected by the form. Those elements are Total Employment, Total Number of Job Openings, Total Hires, Quits, Layoffs and Discharges, and Other Separations. Quits, Layoffs and Discharges, and Other Separations comprise Total Separations.

The reference period for Total Employment is the pay period including the 12th of the month. The reference period for Job Openings is the last business day of the month. Hires and Separations are requested for the entire month.

The information is published monthly at the NAICS Supersector level for the U.S. and at the total non-agriculture level for the major Census regions. The data are made public via press releases and the BLS Web Site. The data are used by BLS economists in their efforts to interpret and report labor market developments. Businesses use the data to compare their own turnover rates to a national figure. JOLTS data are useful to academics studying labor economics. Policy analysts can use the data to track the business cycle.

3. Use of Technology to Reduce Burden:

JOLTS collects data using CATI for the first six months a unit is in the sample. JOLTS then encourages use of web technology in collecting data after a sample unit's sixth month in the sample. Email and fax reporting are other alternatives for collection. These options allow the respondent to save time since they do not have to process and return the form by mail. The initial six months reporting via CATI is necessary to help the respondent understand the form and data requested.

Although every attempt is made to schedule CATI interviews at the most convenient time for respondents, email, fax, or Web reporting allow respondents an even greater flexibility in responding at their most convenient time.

Respondents who are not able to break out Separations into Quits, Layoffs and Discharges, and Other Separations, are routed through web collection in such a way as to only report Total Separations. This use of web collection reduces their response time and their overall burden.

4. Identification of Duplication and Availability of Similar Information:

Extensive research using libraries, other statistical agencies, and the Internet has not identified similar information. Some academics have made use of proxies, such as the "Help Wanted Online" from the Conference Board (<http://www.conhelpwantedonline.cfm>), but this measure falls short of an accurate measurement of true job openings since it creates the index based solely on help-wanted advertising in newspapers.

5. Small Businesses:

The information requested is readily available in both small and large firms. Special attention was paid to selecting reference periods for data elements that were easily understandable to all respondents.

The JOLTS sampling frame is stratified by geographic Region, Industry Supersector, and Employment Size Class. A stratified sample is allocated using the Neyman allocation (Cochran, 1977, pp. 259-261) methodology. This stratification and allocation methodology ensures that small businesses are sampled at a lower rate (i.e., lower

probability of selection) than large businesses; this reduces the respondent burden on small establishments relative to large establishments.

6. Less Frequent Conduct of Study:

As an indicator of the demand for labor that would be parallel to existing measures of unemployment, less frequent conduct of study would diminish the ability of BLS to produce meaningful statistical estimates. In addition, it would prevent the estimates from being used as a leading indicator of business cycles and current economic trends.

7. Special Circumstances:

JOLTS releases data rates and levels on a monthly basis, therefore requiring collection of information on a monthly basis to support the monthly estimate.

8. Consultation with Persons Outside BLS:

One public comment was received as a result of the Federal Register Notice published in 83 FR 15408 on April 10, 2018.

The commenter stressed support for the continuation of JOLTS collection at the current frequency. The commenter noted that “the frequency of the information collected is a key part of the JOLTS reports’ practical utility...” and that “[a] less frequent information collection process would hinder existing research projects and restrict future opportunities to provide policy decision-makers with relevant and current information.”

During the original development of the JOLTS concepts and forms, the JOLTS form was sent to seven experts for their comments regarding the data elements to be collected. The comments were solicited to ensure that the form collected only essential data elements and/or appropriate breakouts. The result is a form that imposes the least respondent burden while capturing data essential to produce a quality economic indicator.

Reviewers of Form:

Katharine Abraham	Past Commissioner, BLS
Carolyn Bagin	Center for Clear Communications, Inc.
Dan Hamermesh	University of Texas
Harry Holzer	Chief Economist, DOL/Michigan State University
Larry Katz	Harvard University
Bruce Meyers	Northwestern University
Dan Sullivan	Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago
William Wascher	National Bureau of Economic Research/ Bank for International Settlements
Joyce Zickler	Federal Reserve - DC

Also, during 2008 an OMB approved response analysis survey was conducted to determine the cause for employment divergence within the temporary help industry.

Discussions were held with the owner of a Manpower Inc. franchise to identify possible areas of improvement in our survey questions.

9. Gifts or Payments to Respondents:

There will be no gifts or payments to respondents.

10. Confidential Responses:

The Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (CIPSEA) safeguards the confidentiality of individually identifiable information acquired under a pledge of confidentiality by controlling access to, and uses made of, such information. CIPSEA includes fines and penalties for any knowing and willful disclosure of individually identifiable information by an officer, employee, or agent of the BLS.

Based on this law, the BLS provides respondents with the following confidentiality pledge/informed consent statement:

The Bureau of Labor Statistics, its employees, agents, and partner statistical agencies, will use the information you provide for statistical purposes only and will hold the information in confidence to the full extent permitted by law. In accordance with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (Title 5 of Public Law 107-347) and other applicable Federal laws, your responses will not be disclosed in identifiable form without your informed consent. Per the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015, Federal information systems are protected from malicious activities through cybersecurity screening of transmitted data

BLS policy on the confidential nature of respondent identifiable information (RII) states that “RII acquired or maintained by the BLS for exclusively statistical purposes and under a pledge of confidentiality shall be treated in a manner that ensures the information will be used only for statistical purposes and will be accessible only to authorized individuals with a need-to-know.”

11. Sensitive Questions:

No sensitive questions will be asked.

12. Burden of Collection:

Explanation of how the total burden hours is displayed for fiscal year 2019 which is representative of a complete year as it includes 12 months.

Fiscal Year 2019
 (October 2018 - September 2019)

Private

Form	Annual Responses	Average Response Time	Annual Burden	Average Hourly Wage Rate	Total Burden Costs
CATI	43,281	10 minutes	7,213	\$27.88	\$201,098.44
Fax	1,082	10 minutes	180	\$27.88	\$5,018.40
Email	3,246	10 minutes	541	\$27.88	\$15,083.08
Web	60,594	10 minutes	10,099	\$27.88	\$284,560.12
Total	108,203		18,033		\$502,760.04

State, Local, and Tribal Government

Form	Annual Responses	Average Response Time	Annual Burden	Average Hourly Wage Rate	Total Burden Costs
CATI	6,792	10 minutes	1,132	\$27.88	\$31,560.16
Fax	170	10 minutes	28	\$27.88	\$780.64
Email	509	10 minutes	85	\$27.88	\$2,369.80
Web	9,510	10 minutes	1,585	\$27.88	\$44,189.80
Total	16,981		2,830		\$78,900.40

Federal Government

Form	Annual Responses	Average Response Time	Annual Burden	Average Hourly Wage Rate	Total Burden Costs
CATI	1,887	10 minutes	314	\$27.88	\$8,754.32
Fax	47	10 minutes	8	\$27.88	\$223.04
Email	141	10 minutes	24	\$27.88	\$669.12
Web	2,642	10 minutes	440	\$27.88	\$12,267.20
Total	4,717		786		\$21,913.68
Totals (rounded)	129,900		21,650		\$603,574.12

Burden cost was calculated by obtaining the hourly employment cost for office and administrative support occupations as determined by the National Compensation Survey (NCS) Employment Cost for Employee Compensation. The employment cost for the third quarter of 2017, the most current quarter available, was \$26.28¹. This base was increased by 3% for each of the years until FY 2019. The hourly rate was then multiplied by the number of hours required for responding (burden hours). The resulting hourly wage used for FY 2019 was \$27.88.

13. Capital/Start-up Cost

There are no capital/start-up costs.

14. Cost to the Federal Government:

The annual JOLTS budget is approximately \$5 million, which includes roughly \$2 million annually for data collection labor hours.

¹ http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/ecec_12152017.pdf Pg. 5, Table 2.

15. Changes in Burden:

This request shows no change in respondents (10,825), annual responses (129,900), and burden hours (21,650) from current approval. The JOLTS program plans to extend the period that respondents are in the sample from 24 months to 36 months sometime before this approval expires and will seek an appropriate increase in respondents and burden hours at that time.

16. Publication Plans/Schedule:

The JOLTS program releases data on a monthly basis available at www.bls.gov/jlt/. The release is available within 30 - 60 working days of the survey reference month. Regular monthly releases began April 15, 2004.

17. OMB Approval Expiration Date:

BLS is requesting OMB approval for permission to suppress the expiration date on the JOLTS forms. A printed expiration date would restrict JOLTS' ability to use these same forms in subsequent years. A waiver of the printed expiration date requirement is necessary to reduce the significant costs associated with printing new forms because of a change in the date.

18. Exception to Certification Statement:

There are no exceptions to the certification.