

# The Year 2000: A Turning Point for the U.S. Labor Market



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THE YEAR 2000:  
A TURNING POINT FOR THE U.S. LABOR MARKET

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We economists are at our best when looking back in time rather than forward. An economy as large and diverse as the United States economy takes unexpected twists and turns, hence making economic forecasting a shaky endeavor. Careful analysis of historical data, however, gives us a valuable perspective from which to glean nuggets about the current and future state of affairs.

This paper examines trends in key labor market statistics collected by the U.S. government over the past century. The principle office entrusted with gathering labor market data is the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).<sup>1</sup> The data suggest that the year 2000 marked a turning point for the U.S. economy as reflected in labor market activities. Almost every key labor indicator collected over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century began to reverse course in 2000, including labor force participation rates of women, Asian, black and Hispanic workers; employment-to-population ratios for men and women; contingent and alternative work arrangements; duration of unemployment; and displaced and discouraged workers.

Given that labor is the largest single factor of production in our national income accounts, the trends send a red flag to policymakers whose aim is to ensure steady growth in the U.S. economy in years to come.

## I. U.S. LABOR MARKET

In 2004, over 223 million people were in the U.S. civilian adult population. This group excludes all military personnel and includes people (ages 16 and over) who are not living in institutions such as penal facilities, mental institutions, or homes for the aged. The civilian population grew 117 percent between 1948 and 2004.

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<sup>1</sup>Please see Appendix 1 for detailed information on how labor market data are collected by the U.S. government.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics divides the civilian population into two groups: those who are in the labor force (i.e., employed and unemployed) and those not in the labor force (i.e., all others). In 2004, there were 147 million people in the U.S. labor force. An additional 76 million adults were not in the labor force either because they did not want paid jobs (71 million) or gave up looking for employment (5 million).

As illustrated in Figure 1, the labor force includes 139 million employed people and 8 million unemployed people. People's employment arrangements vary considerably. The gainfully employed include wage/salary workers (93%) and self-employed workers (7%). An estimated 5 percent of workers have more than one job. Some 82 percent work 35 hours or more a week (at all their jobs), leaving 18 percent with part-time employment (see Figure 2). An estimated 4 percent of employed workers are considered "contingent" whereby their jobs are temporary or not expected to continue. Eleven percent of workers have "alternative work arrangements" as independent contractors, on-call and day laborers, temporary help agency workers, and leased workers. As of 2004, women represented 46 percent of the workforce and whites represented 82 percent (see Figure 3).

## II. TRENDS IN THE U.S. LABOR MARKET

### Civilian Labor Force

Table 1 identifies the annual labor force status of the civilian population from 1948 through 2004, during which time the labor force grew steadily. At the end of World War II, there were 61 million adults in the labor force; by 2004, the figure increased 143 percent to a high of 147 million.

### Labor Force Participation Rates

The labor force participation rate (i.e., the fraction of those in the labor force out of the civilian adult population) grew steadily from 58.8 percent in 1948 to a peak of 67.1 in the period 1997-2000. In 2001—for the first time in recorded history—the labor force participation rate began to drop. By 2004, the participation rate was down to 66.0 percent.

Table 2 separates out the labor force participation rates of men and women. The data indicate that men's participation has been on the decline since 1948 when the rate was 86.6 percent. By 2004, the rate reached a low of 73.3 percent. The pattern for women is quite different. Women's

labor force participation rate grew from a low of 32.7 percent in 1948 to a high of 60.0 percent in 1999. Beginning in 2000, however, women's participation began to decline and reached a low of 59.2 percent in 2004.

If we look at the labor force participation trends post 2000 among ethnic and racial groups, we see that Asian, black and Hispanic workers shared the same experience as women. While participation rates rose steadily in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to a high in 2000, rates began to drop thereafter (see Table 3).<sup>2</sup>

If we examine only the participation rates of men and women who were gainfully employed (i.e., excluding those looking for jobs), the year 2000 marks yet another turning point. As noted in Table 4, between 2000 and 2004, the employment-to-population ratio for the entire labor force fell from 64.4 percent to 62.3 percent. The drop for women was from 57.5 percent to 56.0 percent; for men, the drop was from 71.9 to 69.2 percent post 2000. Employment rates have been falling post 2000 even after controlling for population changes.

### Unemployment

The Bureau of Labor Statistics attributes the drop in labor force participation rates to three factors. First, the number and percentage of workers who could not find jobs began to rise post-2000. As noted in Table 5, in 2000, 5.7 million people were unemployed (representing 4.0 percent of the labor force); by 2004, 8.2 million people were unemployed (5.5 percent of the labor force). Table 6 indicates that during the same period, the unemployment rate rose for workers of all races and ethnicities, including Asians (3.6 to 4.4 percent), blacks (7.6 to 10.4 percent), and Hispanics (5.7 to 7.0 percent).

The second reason behind the drop in participation is the increasing amount of time required to find employment after losing a job in the post-2000 economy. The average duration of unemployment in 2000 was 12.6 weeks. By 2004, the average was 19.6 weeks (see Table 7). An increasing number of workers became discouraged at the prospects of finding employment and stopped looking for work. Between 2000 and 2004, the number of discouraged workers increased from 262,000 to 466,000 (see Table 8). When workers are categorized as discouraged,

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<sup>2</sup> BLS began collecting labor market statistics on black workers in 1972, Hispanics in 1973, and Asians in 2000.

the BLS removes them from the labor force statistics, which explains part of the post-2000 drop in the overall labor participation rate.

A third factor contributing to the drop in labor market participation is a rise in the number of workers permanently displaced from their jobs in recent years. In 2000, 3.3 million workers were displaced from jobs they held for three or more years. By 2004, the number of displaced workers was 5.3 million (see Tables 9 and 10). Workers lost their jobs due to plants or companies closing down or moving (43 percent), insufficient work (28 percent), and positions or shifts being abolished (29 percent).

Another indicator of the shift in the U.S. economy since 2000 is the reason why workers are unemployed. The Bureau of Labor Statistics records four possible reasons: job losers, job leavers, re-entrants to the labor force, and new entrants never before in the labor force. Economists examine the reasons for being unemployed as a measure of business cycles, expecting involuntary job loss to rise during recessions and voluntary job leaving to rise during expansions. Indeed the booming 1990s resulted in a drop in unemployment due to job loss from 56.1 percent (of the unemployed) in 1992 to 44.2 percent in 2000. Subsequently, the percentage of job losers rose to 55.1 percent in 2003. Meanwhile, job leavers dropped along with re-entrants and new entrants. The trends began reversing somewhat in 2004 (see Table 11).

#### Employment Arrangements

Another interesting phenomena post-2000 is an increase in the incidence of what economists call alternative employment arrangements, which includes part-time work, independent contracts, on-call and day labor, temporary help, and contingent employment. While the percentage of employed workers with more than one job fell from 5.8 percent in 1999 to 5.4 percent in 2004 (see Table 12), the percentage working less than 35 hours a week (i.e., part-time) increased from 16.8 to 17.8 percent (see Table 13).

Meanwhile, more workers are reporting alternative work arrangements in 2005 as independent contractors (10.3 million), on-call and day laborers (2.5 million), temporary help agency workers (1.2 million), and workers provided by contract firms (813,000) representing an increase since 2001 (see Table 14). Lastly, there has been an increase in the number of employed workers considered “contingent” in that their jobs are temporary or not expected to continue.

Between 2001 and 2005, the number of contingent workers increased from 5.4 million to 5.7 million (see Table 15).

#### Persons Not in the Labor Force

As noted in Figure 1, there were 76 million people in the adult population who were not in the labor force in 2004, up from 42 million in 1948. This group includes students, retirees, people with disabilities, those who work for no monetary gain such as volunteers and caretakers, and people who have given up looking for work. Of this 76 million, 71 million indicated that they did not want jobs in 2004 and the remaining 5 million would like to find jobs (see Table 16).

Historically, labor economists have not focused much on people who are out of the labor force. However, with the rise in the number of people in this group, new information is being collected to ascertain whether or not these people are available to work now and their reasons for not looking for employment. Some of the reasons that people reported for not looking for gainful employment in 2004 included family responsibilities (157,000), school (244,000), ill health or disability (123,000), child care, transportation, or other reasons (584,000). While these adults were not gainfully employed and hence excluded from the formal employment statistics, they may indeed be conducting meaningful work and could be paid through either barter arrangements or alternative currencies (e.g., time dollars), hence contributing to the well-being of the nation.

### III. CONCLUSION

The year 2000 marked a turning point for the U.S. economy as captured in the leading labor market indicators collected by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Even before the recession of 2001 (March-November), the events of September 2001, Wall Street scandals (2001-02), and the wars in Afghanistan (2002-03) and Iraq (2003-present), the U.S. economy had begun to reverse course in a number of ways.

After rising throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century,

- labor force participation rates of women, Asians, blacks, and Hispanics began to drop post 2000; and
- employment-to-population ratios for women and men began to fall.

Between 2000 and 2004,

- unemployment rates rose for female, male, Asian, black, and Hispanic workers;
- average duration of unemployment rose from 12.6 to 19.6 weeks;
- the number of discouraged workers rose from 262,000 to 466,000;
- the number of permanently displaced workers rose from 3.3 to 5.3 million;
- the number of contingent workers rose from 5.4 to 5.7 million; and
- the number of workers in alternative employment arrangements rose from 12.5 to 14.8 million.

Perhaps these trends will reverse themselves as the nation moves further into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Or perhaps the United States will continue to slowly lose its global dominance and witness the rise of a new economic superpower on the planet. Either way, attention to the labor market conditions is vital to our national interests now and in the future.

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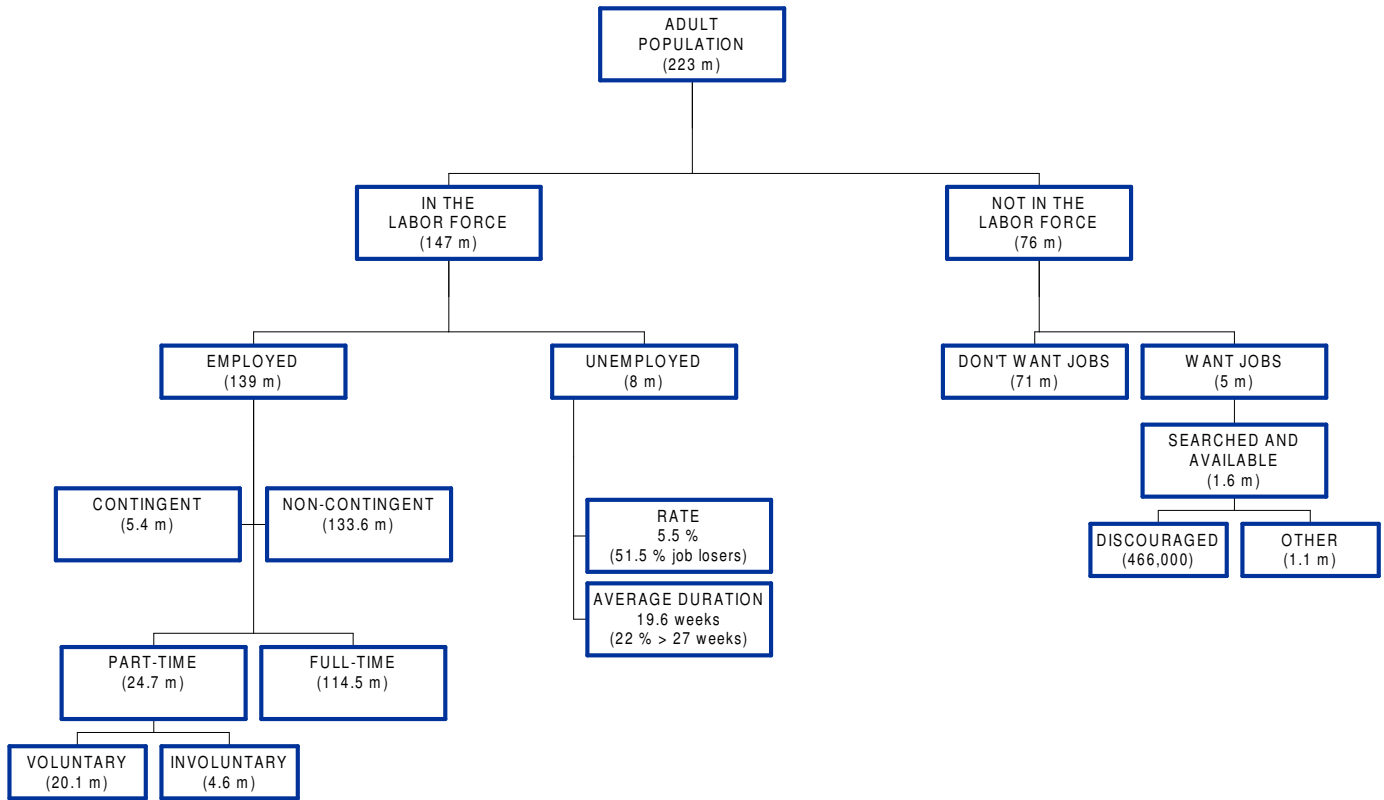
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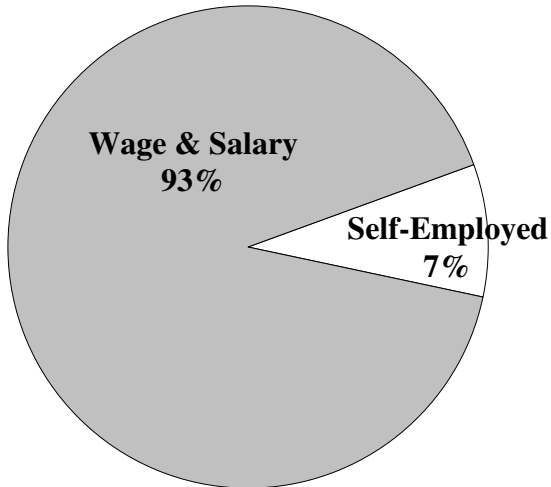
**Figure 1**  
**U.S. LABOR MARKET**  
**IN 2004**



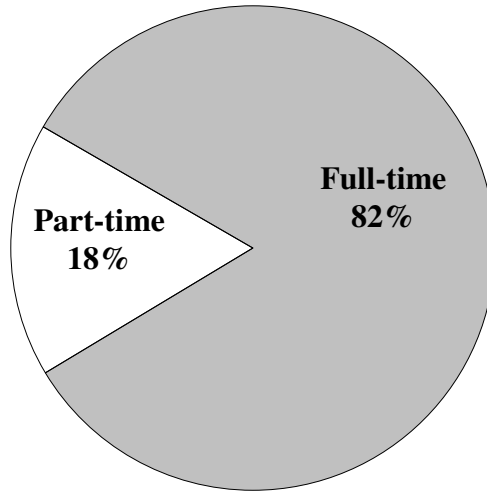
Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005.

**Figure 2**  
**Employment Arrangements**  
**2004**

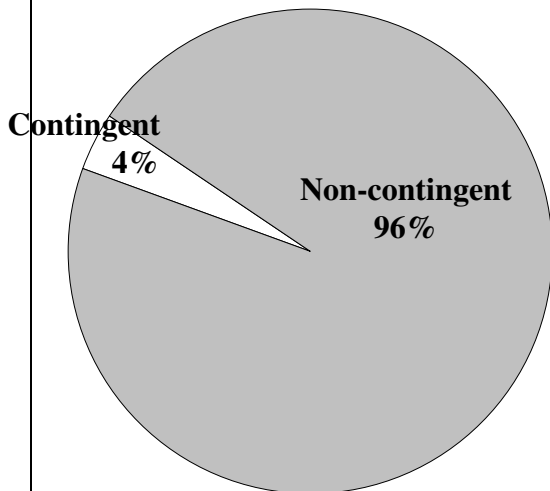
**Self-Employed vs. Wage & Salary**



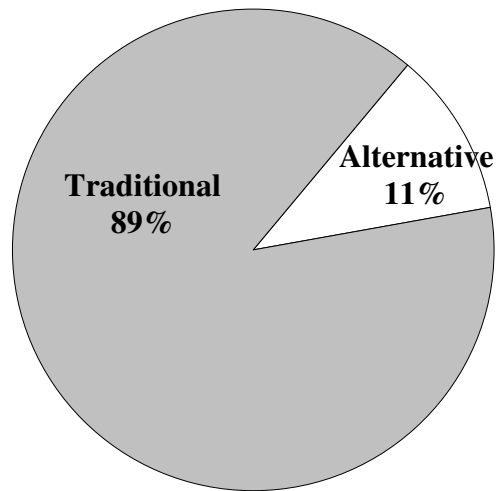
**Full-time vs. Part-time**



**Contingent vs. Non-contingent**

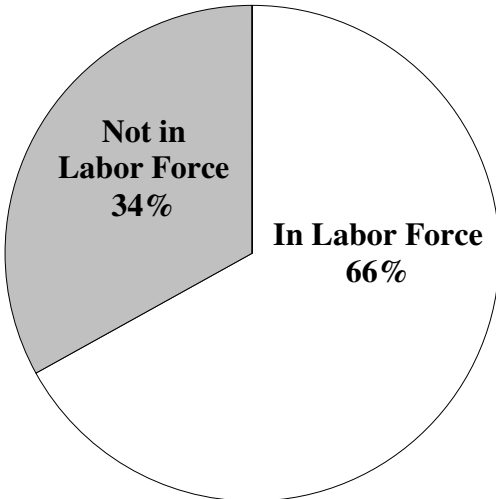


**Alternative vs. Traditional Arrangement**

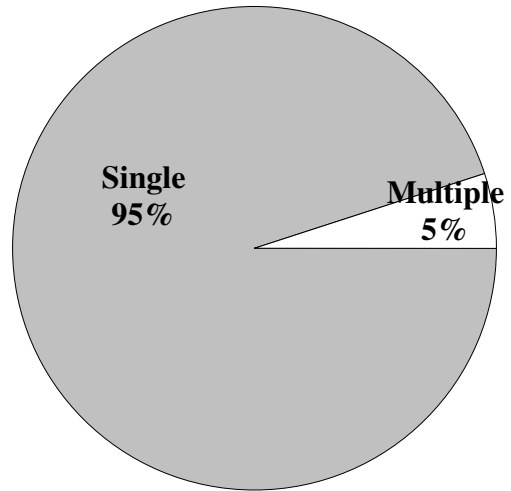


**Figure 3**  
**Workforce Characteristics**  
**2004**

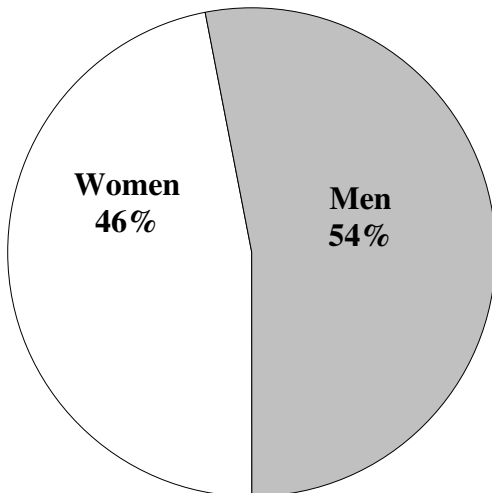
**In vs. Out of the Labor Force**



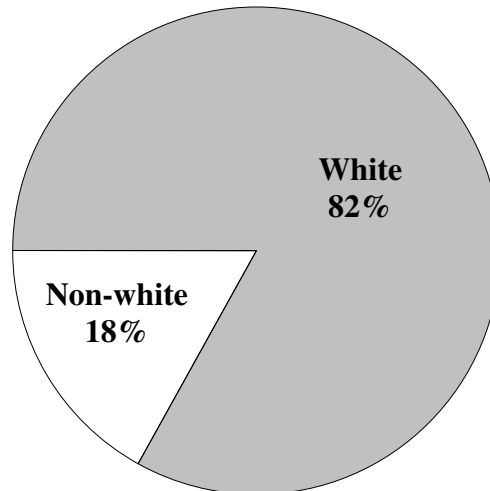
**Multiple vs. Single Job Holders**



**Women vs. Men**



**White vs. Non-white**



**Table 1**  
**Labor Force Status**  
**of U.S. Civilian Population<sup>1</sup>**  
**1948 - 2004**  
**(thousands; percent)**

	Working Age Population	In Labor Force		Not in Labor Force	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1948	103,068	60,621	58.8	42,447	41.2
1949	103,994	61,286	58.9	42,708	41.1
1950	104,995	62,208	59.2	42,787	40.8
1951	104,621	62,017	59.3	42,604	40.7
1952	105,231	62,138	59.0	43,093	41.0
1953	107,056	63,015	58.9	44,041	41.1
1954	108,321	63,643	58.8	44,678	41.2
1955	109,683	65,023	59.3	44,660	40.7
1956	110,954	66,552	60.0	44,402	40.0
1957	112,265	66,929	59.6	45,336	40.4
1958	113,727	67,639	59.5	46,088	40.5
1959	115,329	68,369	59.3	46,960	40.7
1960	117,245	69,628	59.4	47,617	40.6
1961	118,771	70,459	59.3	48,312	40.7
1962	120,153	70,614	58.8	49,539	41.2
1963	122,416	71,833	58.7	50,583	41.3
1964	124,485	73,091	58.7	51,394	41.3
1965	126,513	74,455	58.9	52,058	41.1
1966	128,058	75,770	59.2	52,288	40.8
1967	129,874	77,347	59.6	52,527	40.4
1968	132,028	78,737	59.6	53,291	40.4
1969	134,335	80,734	60.1	53,602	39.9
1970	137,085	82,771	60.4	54,315	39.6
1971	140,216	84,382	60.2	55,834	39.8
1972	144,126	87,034	60.4	57,091	39.6
1973	147,096	89,429	60.8	57,667	39.2
1974	150,120	91,949	61.3	58,171	38.7

*continued*

*Table 1 continued*

	Working Age Population	In Labor Force		Not in Labor Force	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1975	153,153	93,775	61.2	59,377	38.8
1976	156,150	96,158	61.6	59,991	38.4
1977	159,033	99,009	62.3	60,025	37.7
1978	161,910	102,251	63.2	59,659	36.8
1979	164,863	104,962	63.7	59,900	36.3
1980	167,745	106,940	63.8	60,806	36.2
1981	170,130	108,670	63.9	61,460	36.1
1982	172,271	110,204	64.0	62,067	36.0
1983	174,215	111,550	64.0	62,665	36.0
1984	176,383	113,544	64.4	62,839	35.6
1985	178,206	115,461	64.8	62,744	35.2
1986	180,587	117,834	65.3	62,752	34.7
1987	182,753	119,865	65.6	62,888	34.4
1988	184,613	121,669	65.9	62,944	34.1
1989	186,393	123,869	66.5	62,523	33.5
1990	189,164	125,840	66.5	63,324	33.5
1991	190,925	126,346	66.2	64,578	33.8
1992	192,805	128,105	66.4	64,700	33.6
1993	194,838	129,200	66.3	65,638	33.7
1994	196,814	131,056	66.6	65,758	33.4
1995	198,584	132,304	66.6	66,280	33.4
1996	200,591	133,943	66.8	66,647	33.2
1997	203,133	136,297	67.1	66,837	32.9
1998	205,220	137,673	67.1	67,547	32.9
1999	207,753	139,368	67.1	68,385	32.9
2000	212,577	142,583	67.1	69,994	32.9
2001	215,092	143,734	66.8	71,359	33.2
2002	217,570	144,863	66.6	72,707	33.4
2003	221,168	146,510	66.2	74,658	33.8
2004	223,357	147,401	66.0	75,956	34.0

<sup>1</sup> Civilian population numbers exclude military personnel and people who are living in institutions such as prisons, residential care facilities, and homes for the elderly. Working age population numbers from 1929 to 1946 include people 14 and older; thereafter 16 and older. Data are seasonally adjusted. Numbers may not sum to totals due to rounding.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**Table 2**  
**Labor Force Participation Rates**  
**of Women and Men**  
**1948-2004**  
**(percent)**

Year	Total	Women	Men
1948	58.8	32.7	86.6
1949	58.9	33.1	86.4
1950	59.2	33.9	86.4
1951	59.3	34.6	86.3
1952	59.0	34.7	86.3
1953	58.9	34.4	86.0
1954	58.8	34.6	85.5
1955	59.3	35.7	85.4
1956	60.0	36.9	85.5
1957	59.6	36.9	84.8
1958	59.5	37.1	84.2
1959	59.3	37.1	83.7
1960	59.4	37.7	83.3
1961	59.3	38.1	82.9
1962	58.8	37.9	82.0
1963	58.7	38.3	81.4
1964	58.7	38.7	81.0
1965	58.9	39.3	80.7
1966	59.2	40.3	80.4
1967	59.6	41.1	80.4
1968	59.6	41.6	80.1
1969	60.1	42.7	79.8
1970	60.4	43.3	79.7
1971	60.2	43.4	79.1
1972	60.4	43.9	78.9
1973	60.8	44.7	78.8
1974	61.3	45.7	78.7
1975	61.2	46.3	77.9
1976	61.6	47.3	77.5
1977	62.3	48.4	77.7
1978	63.2	50.0	77.9
1979	63.7	50.9	77.8

*continued*

*Table 2 continued*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
1980	63.8	51.5	77.4
1981	63.9	52.1	77.0
1982	64.0	52.6	76.6
1983	64.0	52.9	76.4
1984	64.4	53.6	76.4
1985	64.8	54.5	76.3
1986	65.3	55.3	76.3
1987	65.6	56.0	76.2
1988	65.9	56.6	76.2
1989	66.5	57.4	76.4
1990	66.5	57.5	76.4
1991	66.2	57.4	75.8
1992	66.4	57.8	75.8
1993	66.3	57.9	75.4
1994	66.6	58.8	75.1
1995	66.6	58.9	75.0
1996	66.8	59.3	74.9
1997	67.1	59.8	75.0
1998	67.1	59.8	74.9
1999	67.1	60.0	74.7
2000	67.1	59.9	74.8
2001	66.8	59.8	74.4
2002	66.6	59.6	74.1
2003	66.2	59.5	73.5
2004	66.0	59.2	73.3

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**Table 3**  
**Selected Labor Force Participation Rates**  
**by Gender and Ethnicity**  
**1960 - 2004**  
**(percent)**

	<b>1960</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2004</b>
Total	59.4	60.4	63.8	66.5	67.1	66.8	66.0
Women	37.7	43.3	51.5	57.5	59.9	59.8	59.2
Men	83.3	79.7	77.4	76.4	74.8	74.4	73.3
Asian	–	–	–	–	67.2	67.2	65.9
Black	–	–	61.0	64.0	65.8	65.3	63.8
Hispanic	–	–	64.0	67.7	69.7	69.5	68.6
White	58.8	60.2	64.1	66.9	67.4	67.0	66.3

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Dash indicates data were not recorded.

**Table 4**  
**Employment-to-Population Ratios**  
**for Women and Men**  
**1948-2004**  
**(percent)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
1948	56.6	31.3	83.5
1949	55.4	31.2	81.3
1950	56.1	32.0	82.0
1951	57.3	33.1	84.0
1952	57.3	33.4	83.9
1953	57.1	33.3	83.6
1954	55.5	32.5	81.0
1955	56.7	34.0	81.8
1956	57.5	35.1	82.3
1957	57.1	35.1	81.3
1958	55.4	34.5	78.5
1959	56.0	35.0	79.3
1960	56.1	35.5	78.9
1961	55.4	35.4	77.6
1962	55.5	35.6	77.7
1963	55.4	35.8	77.1
1964	55.7	36.3	77.3
1965	56.2	37.1	77.5
1966	56.9	38.3	77.9
1967	57.3	39.0	78.0
1968	57.5	39.6	77.8
1969	58.0	40.7	77.6
1970	57.4	40.8	76.2
1971	56.6	40.4	74.9
1972	57.0	41.0	75.0
1973	57.8	42.0	75.5
1974	57.8	42.6	74.9
1975	56.1	42.0	71.7
1976	56.8	43.2	72.0
1977	57.9	44.5	72.8
1978	59.3	46.4	73.8
1979	59.9	47.5	73.8

*continued*

*Table 4 continued*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
1980	59.2	47.7	72.0
1981	59.0	48.0	71.3
1982	57.8	47.4	69.0
1983	57.9	48.0	68.8
1984	59.5	49.5	70.7
1985	60.1	50.4	70.9
1986	60.7	51.4	71.0
1987	61.5	52.5	71.5
1988	62.3	53.4	72.0
1989	63.0	54.3	72.5
1990	62.8	54.3	72.0
1991	61.7	53.7	70.4
1992	61.5	53.8	69.8
1993	61.7	54.1	70.0
1994	62.5	55.3	70.4
1995	62.9	55.6	70.8
1996	63.2	56.0	70.9
1997	63.8	56.8	71.3
1998	64.1	57.1	71.6
1999	64.3	57.4	71.6
2000	64.4	57.5	71.9
2001	63.7	57.0	70.9
2002	62.7	56.3	69.7
2003	62.3	56.1	68.9
2004	62.3	56.0	69.2

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**Table 5**  
**U.S. Civilian Labor Force: Employed and Unemployed**  
**1929-2004**  
**(thousands; percent)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Labor Force</b>	<b>Employed</b>	<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
1929	49,180	47,630	1,550	3.2
1933	51,590	38,760	12,830	24.9
1939	55,230	45,750	9,480	17.2
1940	55,640	47,520	8,120	14.6
1941	55,910	50,350	5,560	9.9
1942	56,410	53,750	2,660	4.7
1943	55,540	54,470	1,070	1.9
1944	54,630	53,960	670	1.2
1945	53,860	52,820	1,040	1.9
1946	57,520	55,250	2,270	3.9
1947	59,350	57,038	2,311	3.9
1948	60,621	58,343	2,276	3.8
1949	61,286	57,651	3,637	5.9
1950	62,208	58,918	3,288	5.3
1951	62,017	59,961	2,055	3.3
1952	62,138	60,250	1,883	3.0
1953	63,015	61,179	1,834	2.9
1954	63,643	60,109	3,532	5.5
1955	65,023	62,170	2,852	4.4
1956	66,552	63,799	2,750	4.1
1957	66,929	64,071	2,859	4.3
1958	67,639	63,036	4,602	6.8
1959	68,369	64,630	3,740	5.5
1960	69,628	65,778	3,852	5.5
1961	70,459	65,746	4,714	6.7
1962	70,614	66,702	3,911	5.5
1963	71,833	67,762	4,070	5.7
1964	73,091	69,305	3,786	5.2
1965	74,455	71,088	3,366	4.5
1966	75,770	72,895	2,875	3.8
1967	77,347	74,372	2,975	3.8
1968	78,737	75,920	2,817	3.6
1969	80,734	77,902	2,832	3.5

*continued*

*Table 5 continued*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Labor Force</b>	<b>Employed</b>	<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
1970	82,771	78,678	4,093	4.9
1971	84,382	79,367	5,016	5.9
1972	87,034	82,153	4,882	5.6
1973	89,429	85,064	4,365	4.9
1974	91,949	86,794	5,156	5.6
1975	93,775	85,846	7,929	8.5
1976	96,158	88,752	7,406	7.7
1977	99,009	92,017	6,991	7.1
1978	102,251	96,048	6,202	6.1
1979	104,962	98,824	6,137	5.8
1980	106,940	99,302	7,637	7.1
1981	108,670	100,397	8,273	7.6
1982	110,204	99,526	10,678	9.7
1983	111,550	100,834	10,717	9.6
1984	113,544	105,005	8,539	7.5
1985	115,461	107,150	8,312	7.2
1986	117,834	109,597	8,237	7.0
1987	119,865	112,440	7,425	6.2
1988	121,669	114,968	6,701	5.5
1989	123,869	117,342	6,528	5.3
1990	125,840	118,793	7,047	5.6
1991	126,346	117,718	8,628	6.8
1992	128,105	118,492	9,613	7.5
1993	129,200	120,259	8,940	6.9
1994*	131,056	123,060	7,996	6.1
1995	132,304	124,900	7,404	5.6
1996	133,943	126,708	7,236	5.4
1997	136,297	129,558	6,739	4.9
1998	137,673	131,463	6,210	4.5
1999	139,368	133,488	5,880	4.2
2000	142,583	136,891	5,692	4.0
2001	143,734	136,933	6,801	4.7
2002	144,863	136,485	8,378	5.8
2003	146,510	137,736	8,774	6.0
2004	147,401	139,252	8,149	5.5

\* Not strictly comparable with earlier data due to population adjustments and a major redesign of the CPS household survey.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**Table 6**  
**Selected Unemployment Rates**  
**1973-2004**  
**(percent)**

	1973	1980	1990	2000	2001	2004
Total	4.9	7.1	5.6	4.0	4.7	5.5
Women, 20 and over	4.9	6.4	4.9	3.6	4.1	4.9
Men, 20 and over	3.3	5.9	5.0	3.3	4.2	5.0
Teenagers, 16-19	14.5	17.8	15.5	13.1	14.7	17.0
Asian *	–	–	–	3.6	4.5	4.4
Women, 20 and over	–	–	–	3.1	4.1	4.2
Men, 20 and over	–	–	–	3.1	4.2	4.2
Teenagers, 16-19	–	–	–	14.2	12.6	11.5
Black **	9.4	14.3	11.4	7.6	8.6	10.4
Women, 20 and over	8.6	11.9	9.7	6.3	7.0	8.9
Men, 20 and over	6.0	12.4	10.4	7.0	8.0	9.9
Teenagers, 16-19	31.5	38.5	30.9	24.7	29.0	31.7
Hispanic ***	7.5	10.1	8.2	5.7	6.6	7.0
Women, 20 and over	7.3	9.2	7.5	5.9	6.6	7.0
Men, 20 and over	5.4	8.3	7.0	4.2	5.2	5.8
Teenagers, 16-19	19.7	22.5	19.5	16.7	17.7	20.4
White	4.3	6.3	4.8	3.5	4.2	4.8
Women, 20 and over	4.3	5.6	4.1	3.1	3.6	4.2
Men, 20 and over	3.0	5.3	4.3	2.8	3.7	4.4
Teenagers, 16-19	12.6	15.5	13.5	11.4	12.7	15.0

\* Data first recorded in 2000.

\*\* Data first recorded in 1972.

\*\*\* Data first recorded in 1973.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**Table 7**  
**Duration of Unemployment**  
**1960-2004**  
**(weeks)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>
1960	12.8	–	1985	15.6	6.8
1961	15.6	–	1986	15.0	6.9
1962	14.7	–	1987	14.5	6.5
1963	14.0	–	1988	13.5	5.9
1964	13.3	–	1989	11.9	4.8
1965	11.8	–	1990	12.0	5.3
1966	10.4	–	1991	13.7	6.8
1967	8.7	–	1992	17.7	8.7
1968	8.4	4.5	1993	18.0	8.3
1969	7.8	4.4	1994	18.8	9.2
1970	8.6	4.9	1995	16.6	8.3
1971	11.3	6.3	1996	16.7	8.3
1972	12.0	6.2	1997	15.8	8.0
1973	10.0	5.2	1998	14.5	6.7
1974	9.8	5.2	1999	13.4	6.4
1975	14.2	8.4	2000	12.6	5.9
1976	15.8	8.2	2001	13.1	6.8
1977	14.3	7.0	2002	16.6	9.1
1978	11.9	5.9	2003	19.2	10.1
1979	10.8	5.4	2004	19.6	9.8
1980	11.9	6.5			
1981	13.7	6.9			
1982	15.6	8.7			
1983	20.0	10.1			
1984	18.2	7.9			

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Dash indicates data not recorded.

**Table 8**  
**Discouraged Workers Not in the Labor Force<sup>1</sup>**  
**by Gender**  
**1994 - 2004**

Year	Total	Women	Men
1994	500,000	204,000	296,000
1995	410,000	166,000	245,000
1996	397,000	164,000	233,000
1997	343,000	143,000	200,000
1998	331,000	133,000	198,000
1999	273,000	113,000	161,000
2000	262,000	101,000	161,000
2001	321,000	129,000	192,000
2002	369,000	143,000	226,000
2003	457,000	190,000	266,000
2004	466,000	178,000	288,000

<sup>1</sup>Discouraged workers, a subset of the marginally attached, have given a job-market related reason for not currently looking for a job. Marginally attached workers are persons who currently are neither working nor looking for work but indicate that they want and are available for a job and have looked for work sometime in the recent past. Numbers may not sum to totals due to rounding.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

<b>Table 9</b>			
<b>Displaced Workers<sup>1</sup></b>			
<b>2000 - 2004</b>			
<b>(thousands)</b>			
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2004</b>
Total (20 and older)	3,314	4,024	5,329
Women	1,534	1,812	2,319
Men	1,780	2,212	3,010
Asian	–	–	215
Black	368	467	695
Hispanic	362	359	608
White	2,794	3,391	4,273

<sup>1</sup>Displaced Workers refers to persons who had 3 or more years of tenure on a job they lost or left because of plant or company closings or moves, insufficient work, or the abolishment of their positions or shifts. Dash indicates data not recorded.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

<b>Table 10</b>			
<b>Displaced Workers by Reason for Job Loss</b>			
<b>2004</b>			
<b>(percent)</b>			
	<b>Plant or company closed down or moved</b>	<b>Insufficient work</b>	<b>Position or shift abolished</b>
Total (20 and older)	43.1	28.3	28.6
Women	46.3	23.7	30.1
Men	40.7	31.9	27.5
Asian	44.8	36.7	18.5
Black	47.1	28.9	24.1
Hispanic	41.5	36.1	22.4
White	42.7	24.4	29.9

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**Table 11**  
**Reasons for Unemployment**  
**1968-2004**  
**(percent)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Job Losers</b>	<b>Job Leavers</b>	<b>Re-entrants</b>	<b>New Entrants</b>
1968	38.0	15.3	32.3	14.4
1969	35.9	15.4	34.1	14.6
1970	44.2	13.4	30.0	12.3
1971	46.3	11.8	29.3	12.6
1972	43.2	13.1	29.8	13.9
1973	38.8	15.6	30.7	14.9
1974	43.5	14.9	28.4	13.2
1975	55.3	10.4	23.9	10.4
1976	49.7	12.2	26.0	12.1
1977	45.3	13.0	28.1	13.6
1978	41.7	14.1	29.9	14.3
1979	42.9	14.3	29.4	13.3
1980	51.7	11.7	25.2	11.4
1981	51.6	11.2	25.4	11.9
1982	58.7	7.9	22.3	11.1
1983	58.4	7.7	22.5	11.3
1984	51.8	9.6	25.6	13.0
1985	49.8	10.6	27.1	12.5
1986	49.0	12.3	26.2	12.5
1987	48.0	13.0	26.6	12.4
1988	46.1	14.7	27.0	12.2
1989	45.7	15.7	28.2	10.4
1990	48.1	14.8	27.4	9.7
1991	54.4	11.6	24.8	9.2
1992	56.1	10.4	23.8	9.7
1993	54.2	10.9	24.6	10.3
1994*	47.7	9.9	34.8	7.6

*continued*

*Table 11 continued*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Job Losers</b>	<b>Job Leavers</b>	<b>Re-entrants</b>	<b>New Entrants</b>
1995	47.0	11.1	34.1	7.8
1996	46.6	10.7	34.7	8.0
1997	45.1	11.8	34.7	8.4
1998	45.4	11.8	34.3	8.4
1999	44.6	13.3	34.1	8.0
2000	44.2	13.7	34.5	7.6
2001	51.1	12.3	29.9	6.8
2002	55.0	10.3	28.3	6.4
2003	55.1	9.3	28.2	7.3
2004	51.5	10.5	29.5	8.4

\* Beginning January 1994, job losers also includes persons who completed temporary jobs.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

<b>Table 12</b>						
<b>Multiple Job Holders by Gender</b>						
<b>1999 - 2004</b>						
<b>(thousands; percent)</b>						
	<b>Total</b>		<b>Women</b>		<b>Men</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1999	7,802	5.8	3,698	6.0	4,104	5.7
2000	7,604	5.6	3,608	5.7	3,996	5.5
2001	7,357	5.4	3,523	5.5	3,834	5.2
2002	7,291	5.3	3,557	5.6	3,734	5.1
2003	7,315	5.3	3,599	5.6	3,716	5.1
2004	7,473	5.4	3,638	5.6	3,835	5.1

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Percentages are a fraction of those employed.

**Table 13**  
**Distribution of Full-time and Part-time Workers**  
**by Age, Gender, and Race**  
**2000 and 2004**  
**(thousands)**

Characteristics	Employed Workers		Full-time		Part-time	
	2000	2004	2000	2004	2000	2004
Total (16 and over)	136,891	139,252	113,846	114,518	23,044	24,734
20 and over	129,701	133,345	111,353	112,747	18,348	20,598
55 and over	18,181	22,150	13,695	16,969	4,486	5,181
Women	63,586	64,728	47,916	48,073	15,670	16,654
Men	73,305	74,524	65,930	66,444	7,375	8,080
Asian	6,043	5,994	5,128	5,085	915	910
Black	15,156	14,909	13,131	12,774	2,025	2,135
Hispanic	15,735	17,930	13,653	15,308	2,083	2,622
White	114,424	115,239	94,506	94,166	19,919	21,073

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Full-time is defined as working 35 hours or more per week in all jobs.

**Table 14**  
**Alternative Work Arrangements**  
**2001 and 2005**  
**(thousands)**

Characteristics	Independent Contractors		On-call and Day Laborers		Temporary Help Agency Workers		Workers Provided by Contract Firms	
	2001	2005	2001	2005	2001	2005	2001	2005
Total	8,585	10,342	2,089	2,454	1,169	1,217	633	813
Women	3,048	3,647	981	1,212	689	643	187	252
Men	5,537	6,696	1,109	1,241	480	574	447	561
Full-time	6,452	7,732	1,100	1,370	925	979	568	695
Part-time	2,133	2,611	989	1,084	244	238	65	119

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Numbers may not sum to totals due to rounding.

**Table 15**  
**Contingent and Noncontingent Workers**  
**2001 and 2005**  
**(thousands)**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Employed Workers</b>		<b>Contingent</b>		<b>Noncontingent</b>	
	<b>2001</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2005</b>
Total	134,605	138,952	5,369	5,705	129,236	133,247
Women	63,229	65,006	2,683	2,790	60,546	62,216
Men	71,376	73,946	2,686	2,914	68,690	71,032
Full-time	110,570	113,798	3,124	3,410	107,446	110,387
Part-time	24,035	25,154	2,245	2,294	21,789	22,860

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Contingent workers include all people whose jobs were temporary or not expected to continue.

**Table 16**  
**Persons Not in the Labor Force**  
**2004**  
**(thousands)**

Category	Total	Age			Gender	
		16 to 24	25 to 54	55 plus	Women	Men
Total	75,956	14,151	21,288	40,517	47,225	28,730
Do not want a job now	71,103	12,422	19,136	39,545	44,538	26,565
Want a job	4,852	1,729	2,152	971	2,687	2,165
In previous year:						
Did not search for work	2,715	886	1,145	684	1,590	1,126
Searched for work	2,137	843	1,006	288	1,097	1,040
Not available to work now	563	279	242	42	333	230
Available to work now	1,574	565	764	245	765	809
Reason for not currently looking:						
Discouraged by job prospects <sup>1</sup>	466	142	240	84	178	288
Reasons other than discouragement:	1,108	423	524	161	587	521
Family responsibilities	157	28	104	24	119	38
In school or training	244	199	43	2	112	131
Ill health or disability	123	18	71	35	67	56
Other <sup>2</sup>	584	178	306	100	288	296

<sup>1</sup> Includes the following responses: believes no work available, could not find work, lacks necessary schooling or training, employer thinks too young or old, and other types of discrimination.

<sup>2</sup> Includes those who did not actively look for work in the prior 4 weeks for such reasons as child-care and transportation problems.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## APPENDIX A:

### Sources of U.S. Labor Market Data

When the U.S. economy fell into a depression in 1929, the Hoover Administration insisted that a comprehensive, rigorous, and regular data collection system be established so that policymakers had better reconnaissance on the economic and social well-being of the nation. One of the first national social indicators data collection initiatives was launched in September 1929 by President Herbert Hoover and resulted in the landmark report by the Research Committee on Social Trends (1933). The Roosevelt Administration continued the tradition and over the period 1933-45 designed and instituted the labor market data system that is still in place today (Sawicki and Flynn 1996; Flynn 2000).

From 1933 to 1959, the U.S. Bureau of the Census was responsible for collecting, tabulating, analyzing, and publishing labor market data for the nation. In 1959, the Census Bureau asked the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to assume responsibility for analyzing and publishing the data collected and tabulated by Census.

The core set of national labor market information has remained fairly consistent over time. The data are gathered from several household and employer surveys administered at various increments. The primary data sources are the Current Population Survey, the Current Employment Survey, and the Occupational Employment Statistics described in turn below.

#### Current Population Survey

The Current Population Survey is a monthly survey of the working age population, 16 years and over. Children are excluded from the official definition of the workforce because child labor laws, compulsory school attendance, and general social customs prevent most children from working. The Current Population Survey is administered each month to a probability sample of approximately 50,000 households representing the civilian noninstitutionalized population in the United States, down from 60,000 prior to 1994. Statistics are gathered on the labor force, employment, unemployment, and persons not in the labor force by demographic, social, and economic conditions. Information is collected on both wage and salary workers and the self-employed. The survey response rate averages 97.5 percent.

While named the Current Population Survey in 1948, the government has collected labor market information from households since the 1930s when the threat of high unemployment during the Depression called for improved methods of data collection. The core set of information collected has remained fairly consistent over time. However, due to changes in women's labor force patterns and adjustment for the known Census undercount of minority populations, the BLS instituted a major redesign of the Current Population Survey in January 1994. Data from 1994 forward are therefore not strictly comparable with earlier data.

The Current Population Survey data are augmented with information from two BLS employer surveys: the Current Employment Survey and the Occupational Employment Statistics.

#### Current Employment Survey

The Current Employment Survey collects monthly payroll data from over 350,000 establishments. Employers provide information on employment, hours worked, and earning by industry on a national, state, and area basis. About 98 percent of all employees on nonfarm payrolls are covered by the Current Employment Survey.

### Occupational Employment Statistics Survey

The Occupational Employment Statistics Survey collects employment data on workers in approximately 725,000 establishments in 400 detailed industries with over 750 occupational categories. The survey follows a three-year cycle: manufacturing firms are surveyed in year one, selected nonmanufacturing in year two, and the balance of nonmanufacturing industries in year three. Information is collected on the occupational composition of different industries. The overall response rate averages 79 percent.

In addition to these three primary sources, supplemental information is collected through periodic surveys and released accordingly. While not complete, government statistics provide reliable baseline information on labor market activities for cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis.