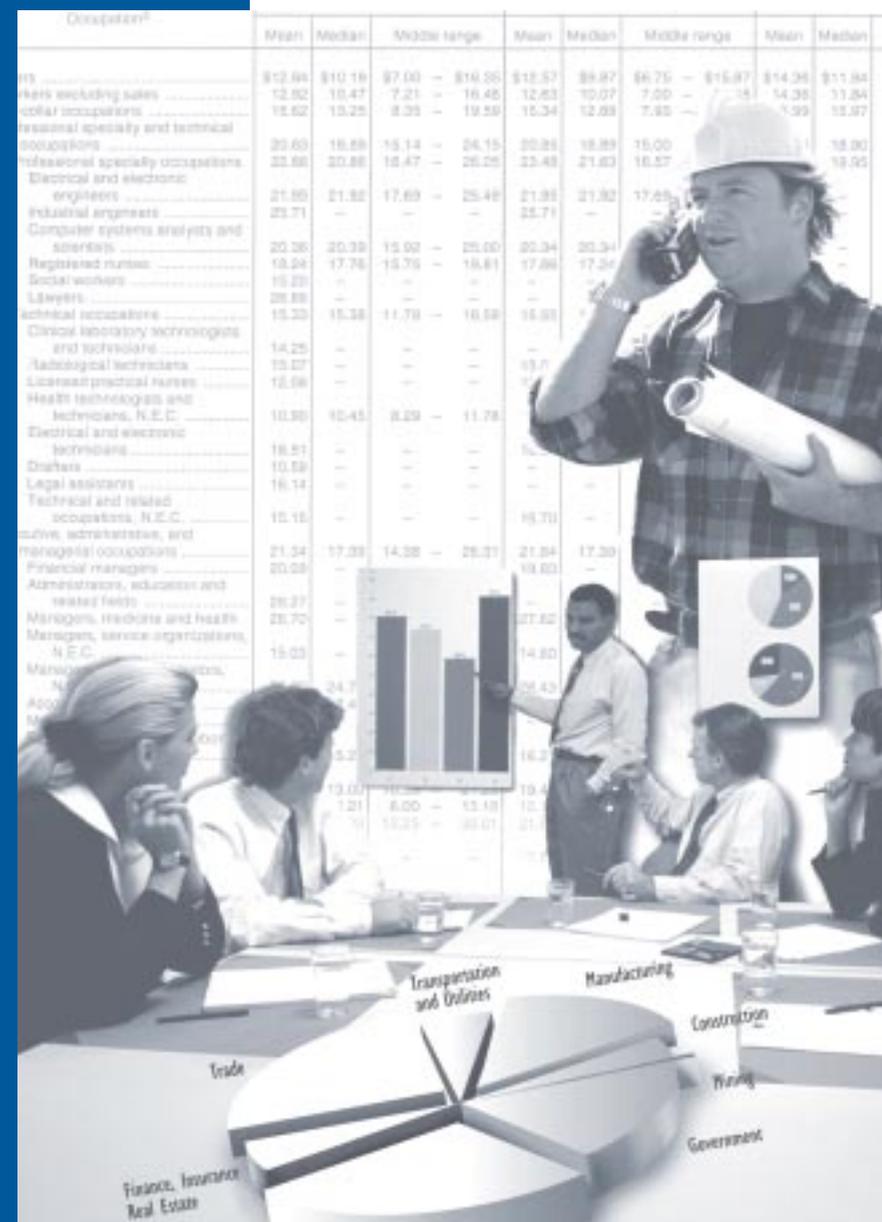


Business Information Guide



U.S. Department of Labor
Bureau of Labor Statistics



U.S. Department of Labor
Bureau of Labor Statistics

Division of Information Services
2 Massachusetts Avenue NE
Room 2860
Washington, DC 20212

July 1997

1998

Bureau
of Labor
Statistics

Business Information Guide

Bureau of Labor Statistics

The Bureau of Labor Statistics is the principal fact-finding agency of the Federal Government for labor and economic statistics. It collects, processes, analyzes, and disseminates sensitive statistical and economic data to the American public, Congress, other Federal agencies, State and local governments, business and labor.

Its mission is to produce and disseminate statistical data that are:

- Relevant to current social and economic issues
- Timely, reflecting today's rapidly changing economic conditions
- Accurate and consistently high in statistical quality
- Impartial in both subject matter and presentation

About this pamphlet

This pamphlet highlights the information produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics that benefits both large and small businesses. It includes descriptions of selected statistical programs under the following headings:

- Compensation and working conditions
- Employment and unemployment
- Prices and living conditions
- Productivity
- Employment projections

See page 11 for sources of additional information on these programs and other useful data produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Compensation and Working Conditions

Nation Compensation Survey (NCS)

Newly-revised survey designed to provide wage and benefit data by occupation for private sector and government establishments in selected areas, by region, and nationwide. NCS encompasses the following outputs:

Employee Benefits Survey

The incidence and provisions of selected benefits provided by employers to their employees. The survey collects information on paid leave, insurance plans, and pension plans. Data are also collected on the incidence of other benefits such as child care, wellness programs, and educational assistance.

Employment Cost Index

Measures changes in total compensation, in wages and salaries only, and in benefit costs only. All private nonagricultural industries are covered, as are State and local governments.

Occupational Pay

An extensive program of occupational compensation surveys that provides information on average weekly and hourly earnings by occupation.

Data uses:

Private sector

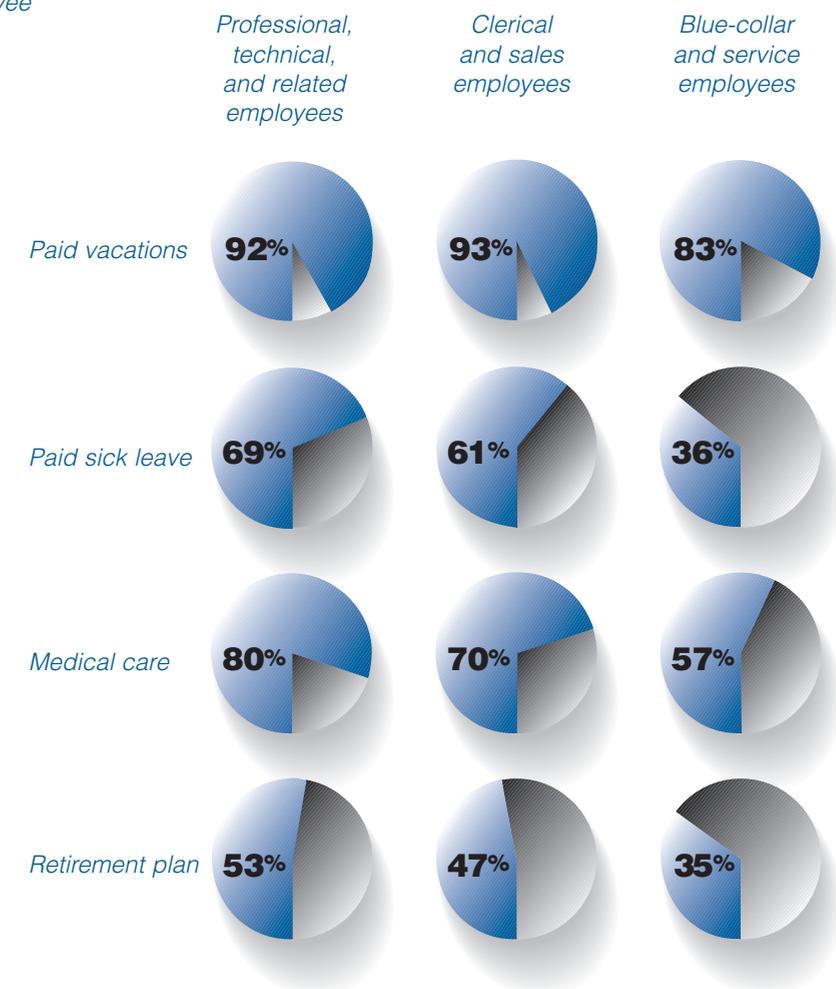
- Aid collective bargaining negotiations
- Evaluate benefits packages
- Analyze contract settlements
- Guide decisions in business or plant location
- Assist in wage and salary administration
- Adjust wages in long-term contracts

Public sector

- Formulate and assess public policy
- Aid collective bargaining negotiations
- Evaluate benefits packages
- Analyze contract settlements
- Index Medicare payments
- Formulate monetary policy

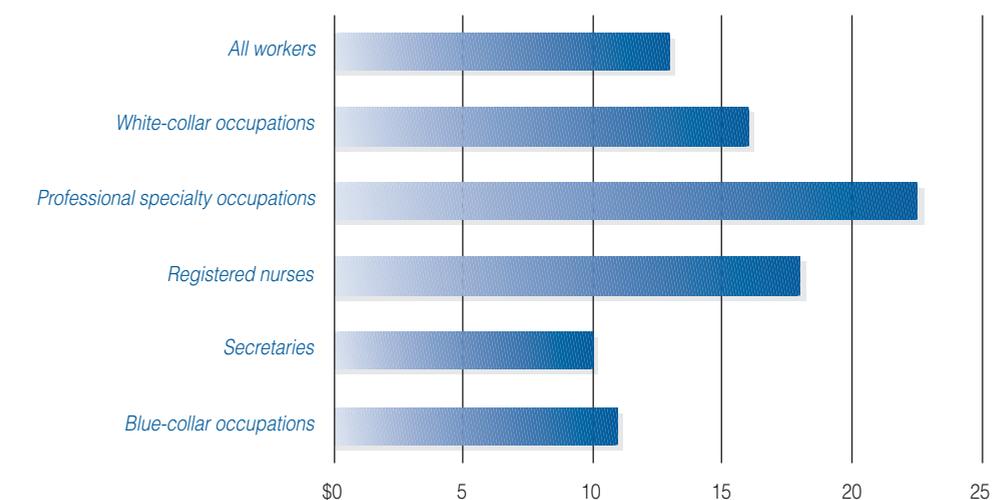
Percentage of full-time employees

participating in small private establishment employee benefits programs



Average hourly earnings in Albuquerque, NM

(February - March 1996)



Employment and Unemployment

Current Employment Statistics

A monthly survey of 400,000 business establishments that provides detailed industry data on nonfarm employment, hours, and earnings estimates based on payroll records. Current data on employment are available for most industries. The program is a cooperative Federal-State undertaking.

Data uses:

Private sector

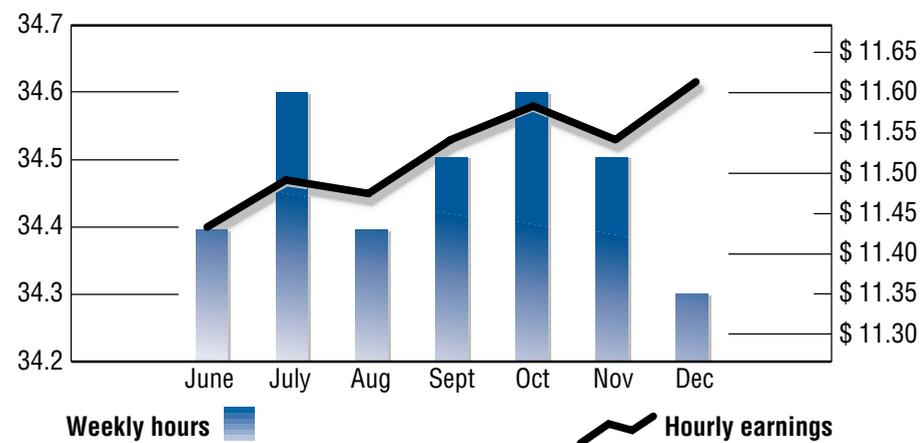
- Guide decisions on plant location, sales, and purchases
- Compare your business to the industry or economy as a whole
- Negotiate labor contracts based on industry or area hourly earnings and weekly hourly series
- Determine the employment base of States and metropolitan areas for bond ratings
- Detect and plan for swings in the business cycle using the employment and average weekly hours series

Public sector

- Evaluate the economic health of States and metropolitan areas
- Guide monetary policy decisions
- Assess the growth of industries
- Forecast tax revenue for States and metropolitan areas
- Measure employment, hours, and earnings to determine economic growth

Average weekly hours and hourly earnings (1995)

Seasonally adjusted, nonsupervisory/production workers



Current Population Survey

A monthly survey of America's households that provides comprehensive information on the employment and unemployment experience of the nation's population. Studies based on the CPS cover a broad range of topics, including analyses of the nation's overall labor market situation as well as that of specific worker groups such as women, older workers, minorities, youth, veterans, and displaced workers.

Data uses:

Private sector

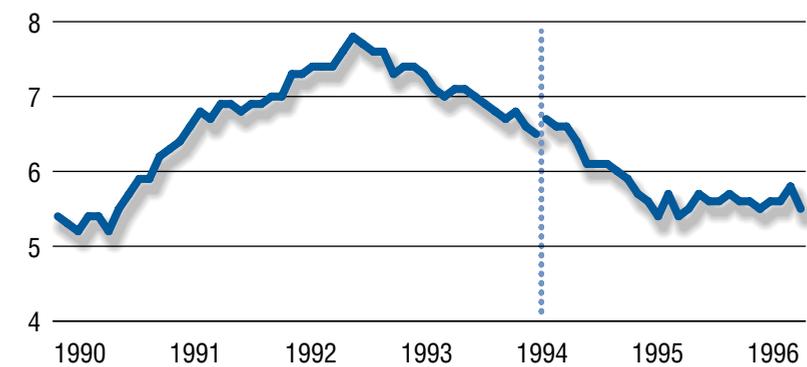
- Guide labor force planning
- Measure potential labor supply based on specific demographic groups
- Evaluate wage rates and earnings trends for specific groups

Public sector

- Evaluate economic health using employment and unemployment statistics
- Assess employment status and characteristics of the labor force, emerging trends, and changes
- Determine factors affecting changes in labor force participation

Unemployment rate

Seasonally adjusted, percent



Household data beginning in January 1994 reflect: 1) the introduction of the results of a major redesign of the Current Population Survey questionnaire and collection methodology, and 2) the introduction of population controls based on the 1990 census, adjusted for the estimated population undercount, and are not directly comparable with data for prior years.

Prices and Living Conditions

Consumer Price Index

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) measures the average change in the prices paid by urban consumers for a fixed market basket of goods and services. The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, fuel, drugs, transportation fares, doctors' and dentists' fees, and other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. It is the most widely used measure of inflation.

Data uses:

Private sector

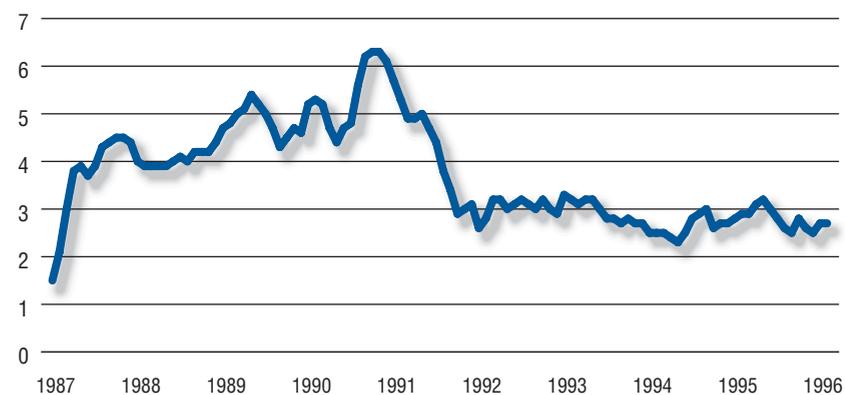
- Guide economic decisions such as wage increases
- Aid collective bargaining negotiations
- Adjust rents and other payments
- Assess health of business using constant dollars

Public sector

- Index Social Security and other payments
- Evaluate economic health of nation

Consumer Price Index, year-to-year percent change

(urban consumers)



Producer Price Index

Producer Price Indexes (PPI) measure the average change in prices received by domestic producers of goods at all stages of processing, as well as some services. Price data are collected for outputs in the mining, manufacturing, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and service sectors of the economy. Gas, electricity, and public utilities are also included. Data are published monthly. Annual average indexes for groupings and items are also available.

Data uses:

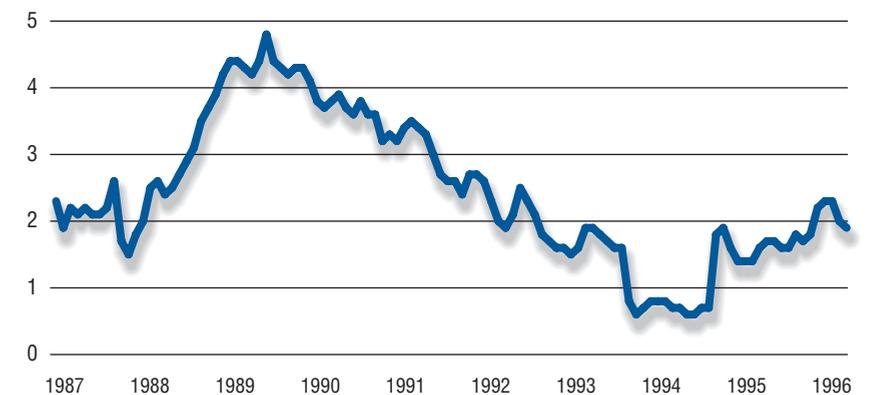
Private sector

- Determine escalation clauses in long-term sales and purchase contracts
- Forecast price movements for industries and products
- Measure inventory valuation
- Compare input and output costs

Public sector

- Measure inflationary trends in the economy
- Formulate and assess public policy

Producer Price Index, year-to-year percent change



Consumer Expenditure Survey

The Consumer Expenditure Survey provides information on the buying habits of American consumers, including data on their expenditures, income, and consumer unit characteristics—families and single consumers and selected demographic characteristics.

Data uses:

Private sector

- Study welfare of particular segments of the population
- Construct economic models of consumption
- Analyze demand for groups of goods and services

Public sector

- As principal data input into the CPI
- Study welfare of particular segments of the population
- Develop consumer guidance materials
- Source of data for revising estimates of components of GDP

International Price Index

This program measures changes in the prices of commodities exported from, or imported into, the United States.

Data uses:

Private sector

- Measurement of import and export price trends
- Exchange rate analysis

Public sector

- Analysis of effects of price changes on U.S. economy and balance of payments
- Analysis of price behavior in international markets
- Basis for calculating changes in volume of U.S. exports and imports

Productivity and Employment Projections

Productivity

This program develops indexes of productivity output per unit of combined labor and capital inputs, from data collected on BLS establishment and household surveys. Indexes are developed for major sectors of the economy and for individual industries. The aim is to understand factors underlying productivity change.

Data uses:

Private sector

- Aid determination of investment options in labor and capital
- Evaluate competitiveness

Public sector

- Provide indicator of health of economy
- Evaluate competitiveness with other countries
- Assess sources of changes in productivity

Employment Projections

This program develops and publishes long-term economic projections. The information includes labor force trends by sex, race, ethnicity, and age, and includes employment trends by industry and occupation. Assessments are also made of the effect on employment of specified changes in economic conditions.

Data uses:

Private sector

- Guide long-term labor force planning
- Forecast availability of labor
- Assist career guidance and counseling

Public sector

- Formulate and assess public policy
- Plan for meeting educational needs

Where to get additional information

BLS has a number of information sources in the form of publications, news releases, time-series data, and research papers that may benefit your business. You can contact BLS about this information via:

Internet:

<http://stats.bls.gov>

Recorded Messages:

To listen to recorded messages call (202) 606-7828.

Fax:

To receive BLS data by fax please dial (202) 606-6325.

To send any other inquiry by fax please dial (202) 606-7890.

Telephone:

Information specialists provide a variety of services between the hours of 8:30 am and 4:30 pm, eastern time at (202) 606-5886.

TDD:

To use the TDD system for the hearing impaired dial (202) 606-5897.

Write or Personal Visit:

Bureau of Labor Statistics
Division of Information Services, Room 2860
2 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20212

Regional Offices:

Addresses and telephone numbers for the Bureau of Labor Statistics regional offices are located on the back cover of this Guide.

Comments:

If you have any comments about this Business Information Guide, please write to the address above, or call (202) 606-5886.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Regional Offices

Region I

JFK Federal Building, E-310
15 New Sudbury Street
Boston, MA 02203-1603
Phone: (617) 565-2327
Fax: (617) 565-4182

Region II

Room 808
201 Varick Street
New York, NY 10014-4811
Phone: (212) 337-2400
Fax: (212) 337-2532

Region III

3535 Market Street, 8th Floor
Gateway Building, Suite 8000
Philadelphia, PA 19104
Phone: (215) 596-1154
Fax: (215) 596-4263

Region IV

Room 7T50
61 Forsyth Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: (404) 562-2463
Fax: (404) 562-2550

Region V

9th Floor
Federal Office Building
230 S. Dearborn Street
Chicago, IL 60604-1595
Phone: (312) 353-1880
Fax: (312) 353-1886

Region VI

Federal Building
525 Griffith Street, Room 221
Dallas, TX 75202-5028
Phone: (214) 767-6970
Fax: (214) 767-3720

Regions VII and VIII

City Center Square
1100 Main, Suite 600
Kansas City, MO 64105-2112
Phone: (616) 426-2481
Fax: (616) 426-6537

Regions IX and X

71 Stevenson Street
P.O. Box 193766
San Francisco, CA 94119-3766
Phone: (415) 975-4350
Fax: (415) 975-4371