

BLS/Census UI Wage Record Collaboration Project

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LEHD Conference
April 2021



Background

In early 2015 BLS began to explore the possibility of obtaining UI Wage Records for production use

- Encouraged by OMB to utilize the wage record data already collected by Census (for the LEHD program)
 - Primary requirement of sharing – no impact on Census collection of data, so states must be on board
- BLS/Census have been meeting since early 2015 to develop a sharing strategy, identify/solve roadblocks, and move project forward



Why does BLS want UI wage records?

1. Onsite microdata production access to improve quality of data series from key programs
 - Current Employment Statistics (CES)
 - Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS)
 - Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)
 - Others (e.g. Occupational and Productivity data, Local Area Unemployment Statistics)
2. Develop new data products to better inform the public on labor issues
3. Support state partners by providing longitudinal multistate wage record data for states statistical research needs

Current Activity

(January 2021)

- BLS and Census determined that the highest-value activity to move the data-sharing project forward was a joint research project
 - Goal – develop a joint BLS/Census product that demonstrates to State partners the benefit of sharing wage record data with BLS
 - Focusing on a project to enhance JOLTS

Project Goal:

Model sub-state JOLTS using Census LEHD data

This is a joint BLS/Census project to explore whether LEHD admin data can improve state-level JOLTS with a primary focus on the potential to develop modeled sub-state JOLTS estimates

- **JOLTS**: survey of ~21,000 establishments on job openings, hires, quits, and layoffs
- **LEHD**: admin data covering over 93% of jobs in U.S., source of Census Job-to-Job Flows (J2J)

Specific goals of project:

- Develop experimental MSA-level JOLTS data for 3 states, jointly released by Census and BLS.
- Explore potential for more research output with linked JOLTS/LEHD microdata



Where we are – JOLTS Research (April 2021):

- **MOU negotiation:** being reviewed by legal staff
- **Census project approval and setup:** establishing project and restricted workspace for collaboration
- **Research:** evaluating statistical quality of model
- **Disclosure avoidance:** establishing how the joint statistics will be protected.
- **Release of data to public:** seek feedback