

U.S. Department of Labor
Bureau of Labor Statistics



November 2020

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TAB 1: Agency Organizational Overview

Mission

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is the principal federal statistical agency responsible for measuring labor market activity, working conditions, price changes, and productivity in the U.S. economy to support public and private decision making. The BLS executes its [mission](#)¹ with independence from partisan interests while protecting the confidentiality of data providers and strives to meet the needs of a diverse set of customers for accurate, objective, relevant, timely, and accessible information and analysis.

Authorizing Legislation

All of the Bureau’s statistical programs, either individually or in conjunction with other programs, meet statutory responsibilities assigned to the BLS or to the Department of Labor (DOL). The originating legislation that required the establishment of the Bureau authorized it to collect information on labor. In addition to the umbrella authorization, which has been interpreted broadly to cover the production of all BLS data, many recent joint resolutions and acts of Congress have required the production and/or use of BLS statistics. Beyond the aforementioned Congressional actions, authorization of BLS output is implicit in the annual Congressional review and enactment of the BLS appropriation to support the Bureau’s statistical output. The Bureau’s authorizing legislation is included below.

Legislation	Statute No. / US Code
An Act to Establish the Bureau of Labor, 1884 (amended by Act of 1913 to establish the Department of Labor)	29 U.S.C. 1-9
The Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933, as amended	29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.
Veterans’ Employment, Training, and Counseling Amendments of 1988	38 U.S.C. 4110A
Trade Act of 1974	19 U.S.C. 2393
Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act	5 U.S.C. 5301-5304
Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970	29 U.S.C. 673

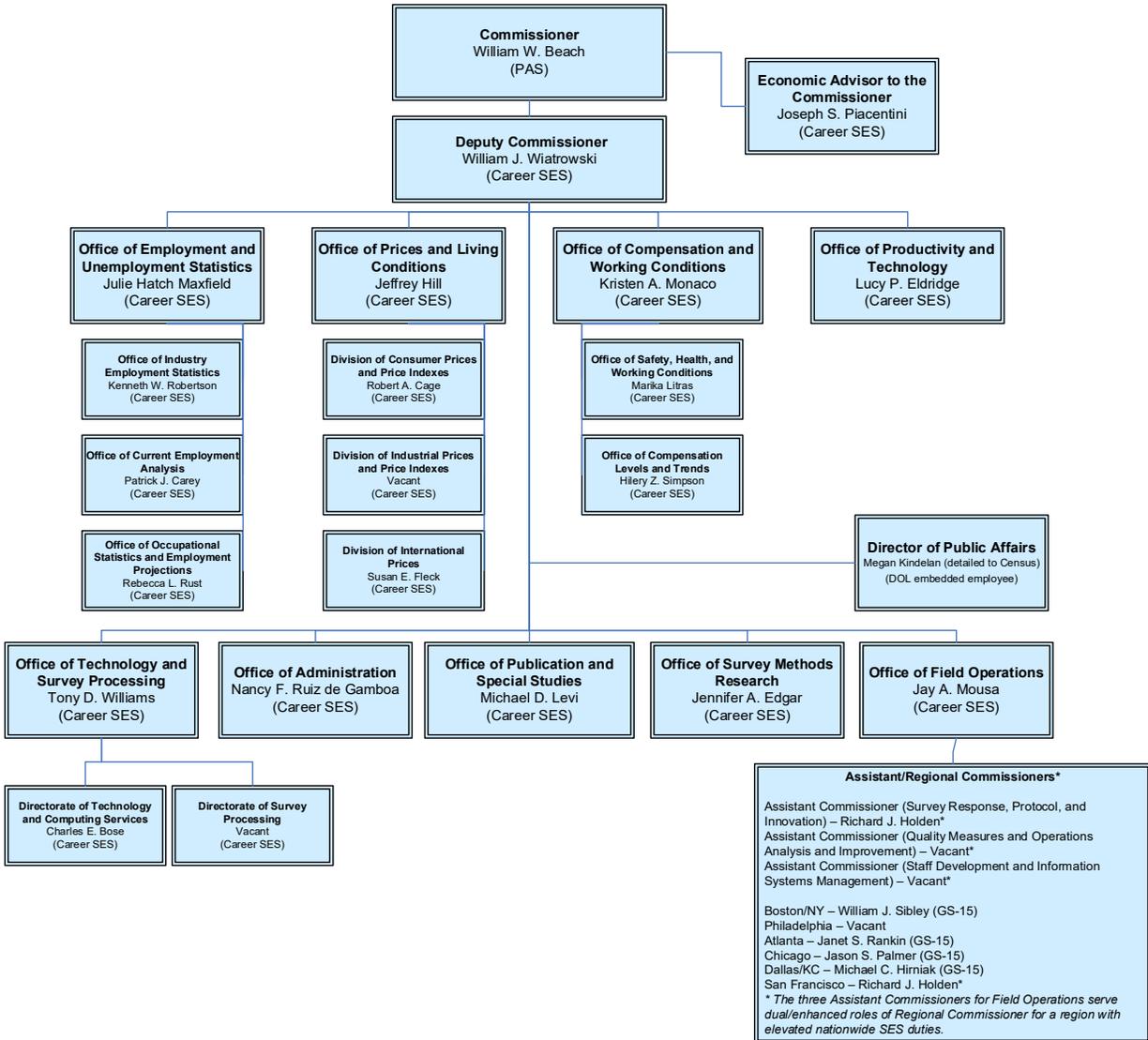
Organizational Structure

The BLS is led by a Commissioner, a Presidentially-appointed and Senate-confirmed position (PAS), for a four-year term. All BLS executives are career members of the Senior Executive Service (SES). There are no Schedule C appointees at the BLS.

¹ <https://www.bls.gov/bls/blsmisn.htm>.

TAB 1: Agency Organizational Overview

Organizational Chart



Note: As of November 2020.

TAB 1: Agency Organizational Overview

Workforce At-A-Glance

**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR EMPLOYMENT *
AS OF 11/1/2020 - BLS**

AGENCY			
Subagency	National Office	Regional Office	Total
BLS	1366	844	2210
Total	1366	844	2210
RACE & GENDER			
Ethnicity	F	M	Total
American Indian		3	5
Asian	132		149
Black	222		159
Hawaiian/PI	0		1
Hispanic	59		62
Two or more Races	12		13
White	559		834
Total	987		1223

BARGAINING UNIT	
Local 12	1013
NCFL	782
Non-BU	415
SUPERVISORY**	
Non Supervisor	1843
Supervisor	367
WORK SCHEDULE	
F-Full Time	1854
I-Intermittent	5
P-Part Time	351
REGIONS	
1 Bos / NY	112
3 Philadelphia	116
4 Atlanta	142
5 Chicago / Kansas City	166
6 Dallas / Denver	152
9 San Francisco / Seattle	156
Natl Ofc	1366
Total	2210

GRADE DISTRIBUTION	
00	27
04	7
05	119
06	72
07	276
08	6
09	106
11	57
12	661
13	533
14	274
15	72
Total	2210
DISABLED STATUS	
No Disability	1966
Non-targeted	191
Targeted	53
APPOINTMENT TENURE	
Indefinite	1
Permanent	2199
Temporary	10
RETIREMENT ELIGIBILITY	
Early Out	323
Eligible	408
Not Eligible	1479

METRO D.C. AREA EMPLOYEES BY BUILDING		
POSTAL SQUARE	1289	
Total	1289	
Includes regional employees working in the D.C. area		
GRADE 13 & ABOVE		
Ethnicity	F	M
Asian	74	81
Black	50	59
Hispanic	17	19
Two or more Races	3	2
White	214	386

* Permanent and Temporary Employees
** Supervisor count includes manager levels 2 and 4

Agency Overview

The BLS administers 20 statistical programs that produce data products on a variety of economic conditions but, specifically, in regard to employment, inflation, compensation, working conditions, and productivity. Among the range of key economic indicators the BLS produces, seven have been designated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as Principal Federal Economic Indicators (PFEIs): [The Employment Situation](#), [the Consumer Price Index](#)

[\(CPI\)](#), [the Producer Price Index \(PPI\)](#), [the U.S. Import and Export Price Index](#), [Productivity and Costs](#), [the Employment Cost Index](#), and [Real Earnings](#).

Labor Force Statistics

Labor Force Statistics programs produce, analyze, and publish aggregate data on payroll employment and the civilian labor force, employment and unemployment, persons not in the labor force, labor demand and turnover, wages, hours, earnings, occupational employment, time use, and employment projections. The programs also prepare studies that cover a broad range of topics important to the work of key agencies in DOL and other stakeholders. The subjects include annual analyses of labor market developments, occupational analyses, characteristics of special worker groups, time-use patterns of workers and non-workers, and labor force experiences of displaced workers. In addition, these programs develop information about the labor market and labor force trends 10 years into the future. They also make assessments of the effect on employment of specified changes in economic conditions and/or changes in federal programs and policies. For example, numerous analyses have appeared in academic journal articles, the BLS *Monthly Labor Review*, and the BLS publication, *Beyond the Numbers*, on such diverse topics as the impact of long-term unemployment, employment in the health care industry, and the impact of worker strikes on the U.S. economy.

Labor Force Statistics publishes two PFEIs, *The Employment Situation* and *Real Earnings* releases, and comprises the following statistical programs and activities:

- [Current Population Survey \(CPS\)](#)
- [Current Employment Statistics \(CES\)](#)²
- [Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages \(QCEW\)](#)²
 - [Business Employment Dynamics \(BED\)](#)
- [Occupational Employment Statistics \(OES\)](#)²
- [Local Area Unemployment Statistics \(LAUS\)](#)²
- [National Longitudinal Surveys \(NLS\)](#)
- [Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey \(JOLTS\)](#)
- [American Time Use Survey \(ATUS\)](#)
- [Employment Projections \(EP\)](#)

Prices and Living Conditions

Prices and Living Conditions programs produce, analyze, and publish a wide variety of information on price change in the U.S. economy, and conduct research and analysis to improve the economic statistics produced. In addition to meeting general statutory responsibilities assigned to the BLS ([29 U.S.C. 1](#) and [2](#)), these programs produce data that form the basis for adjusting or setting payments, benefits, or other income as required by many laws and private sector contracts. Indexes tracking price change are a vital input into both the National Income and Product Accounts and gross domestic product, as price indexes allow conversion from nominal terms into real terms. This allows for easy historical comparisons. Prices and Living

² Part of Federal-State labor market information programs that are funded and managed through cooperative agreements.

Conditions data also are used by the Social Security Administration (SSA) to revise benefits annually based on price level changes, the Internal Revenue Service to update tax brackets, and by numerous states to adjust minimum wage levels.

Prices and Living Conditions publishes three PFEIs, the CPI, PPI, and U.S. Import and Export Price Indexes releases, and comprises the following statistical programs and activities:

- [Consumer Prices and Price Indexes \(CPI\)](#)
- [Producer Prices and Price Indexes \(PPI\)](#)
- [International Price Program \(IPP\)](#)
- [Consumer Expenditure Survey \(CE\)](#)

Compensation and Working Conditions

Compensation and Working Conditions programs produce, analyze, and publish a diverse set of measures of employee compensation, including cost, wages, and benefits, and work-related injuries, illnesses, and fatalities; compile work stoppages statistics; and conduct research to improve the measurement process.

Compensation and Working Conditions publishes one PFEI, the Employment Cost Index release, and comprises the following statistical programs and activities:

- [National Compensation Survey \(NCS\)](#)
 - [Employment Cost Index \(ECI\)](#)
 - [Employee Benefits Survey \(EBS\)](#)
- [Occupational Requirement Survey \(ORS\)](#)³
- [Work Stoppages Statistics \(WSS\)](#)
- [Occupational Safety and Health Statistics \(OSHS\)](#)
 - [Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses \(SOII\)](#)⁴
 - [Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries \(CFOI\)](#)⁴

Productivity and Technology

Productivity and Technology programs produce, analyze, and publish a diverse set of measures of productivity trends in the U.S. economy, as well as in major sectors and individual industries. These programs also analyze trends in order to examine the factors underlying productivity change. The data aid economic policymakers, business leaders, and researchers in analyzing current economic activity. In addition, these data are used as economic indicators; in studies of relationships between productivity, wages, prices, profits, and employment; and as an aid in understanding sources of economic growth. The productivity measurement programs are authorized by an act dated June 7, 1940 ([29 U.S.C. 2b](#)), which directs that the BLS “make continuing studies of productivity and labor costs in the manufacturing, mining, transportation, distribution, and other industries.” Private sector uses of this data include comparing productivity of firms to trends in the larger industry or industries.

³ This program is funded by the SSA, which plans to use the information in their administration of disability programs.

⁴ A Federal-State OSHS program funded and managed through grants.

TAB 1: Agency Organizational Overview

Productivity and Technology publishes one PFEI, the Productivity and Costs release, and comprises the following statistical programs and activities:

- [Major Sector Productivity \(MSP\)](#)
- [Industry Productivity Studies \(IPS\)](#)
- [Productivity Research and Program Development \(PRPD\)](#)
- [International Technical Cooperation \(ITC\)](#)

Executive Direction

Executive Direction and Staff Services provide agency-wide policy and management direction, and centralized program support activities. Major goals of these programs are the development and improvement of economic and statistical programs; efficient management of ongoing programs; and provision of the technical, administrative, information technology, dissemination, and publication services necessary to produce and release statistical and research output in a reliable, secure, timely, and effective manner. Executive Direction supports the BLS statistical programs through the following functional areas:

- Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner
- Administration
- Field Operations
- Publication and Special Studies
- Survey Methods Research
- Technology and Survey Processing

Headquarters Relocation

The Headquarters Relocation activity reflects the funding required for the BLS to relocate its National Office (NO) Headquarters. As detailed in the FY 2020 President's Budget, the Administration directed that the BLS relocate to the Suitland Federal Center in Suitland, Maryland due to the expiration of the current lease. The current lease for the BLS NO in Washington, D.C., at the Postal Square Building expires in May 2022. This location provides workspace for approximately 1,800 federal staff and contractors, as well as hosts the BLS data center.

Coinciding with the headquarters move, the BLS is establishing an off-site data center. As the BLS publishes economic data every week on a pre-determined schedule, any disruption to this schedule could have a significant impact to the U.S. economy and financial markets in the U.S and abroad. The establishment of the data center at a different location will utilize an approach that ensures any potential for disruption is minimized.

More information on BLS Surveys and Programs can be found on the [BLS website](#).

Organizational Changes During the Past Four Years

The BLS has had one organizational change during the past four years to add a Senior Executive as an Economic Advisor to the Commissioner. In addition, DOL implemented Shared Services for human resources, procurement, and personnel security, centralizing these services under the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management (OASAM) at DOL.

Key Leaders

Office of the Commissioner

- **William W. Beach**, Commissioner (Presidential Appointment)
- **William J. Wiatrowski**, Deputy Commissioner
- **Joseph S. Piacentini**, Economic Advisor to the Commissioner
- **Megan Kindelan** (detailed to Census), Director of Public Affairs (DOL embedded employee)

Office of Employment and Unemployment Statistics

- **Julie Hatch Maxfield**, Associate Commissioner
- **Kenneth W. Robertson**, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Industry Employment Statistics
- **Patrick J. Carey**, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Current Employment Analysis
- **Rebecca L. Rust**, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections
- **Mark A. Loewenstein**, Senior Research Economist, Employment Research and Program Development Staff

Office of Prices and Living Conditions

- **Jeffrey Hill**, Associate Commissioner
- **Robert A. Cage**, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Consumer Prices and Price Indexes
- **Vacant**, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Industrial Prices and Price Indexes
- **Susan E. Fleck**, Assistant Commissioner, Division of International Prices
- **Thesia I. Garner**, Chief, Division of Price and Index Number Research

Office of Compensation and Working Conditions

- **Kristen A. Monaco**, Associate Commissioner
- **Marika Litras**, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Safety, Health, and Working Conditions
- **Hilery Z. Simpson**, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Compensation Levels and Trends
- **Nicole Nestoriak**, Research Economist, Compensation Research and Program Development

Office of Productivity and Technology

- **Lucy P. Eldridge**, Associate Commissioner

- **Jay C. Stewart**, Chief, Productivity Research and Program Development

Office of Technology and Survey Processing

- **Tony D. Williams**, Associate Commissioner
- **Vacant**, Director, Directorate of Survey Processing
- **Charles E. Bose**, Director, Directorate of Technology and Computing Services

Office of Administration

- **Nancy F. Ruiz de Gamboa**, Associate Commissioner

Office of Publication and Special Studies

- **Michael D. Levi**, Associate Commissioner

Office of Survey Methods Research

- **Jennifer A. Edgar**, Associate Commissioner
- **William P. Mockovak**, Senior Statistician
- **Vacant**, Senior Statistician

Office of Field Operations

- **Jay A. Mousa**, Associate Commissioner
- **Richard J. Holden**, Assistant Commissioner (Survey Response, Protocol, and Innovation)*
- **Vacant**, Assistant Commissioner (Quality Measures and Operations Analysis and Improvement)*
- **Vacant**, Assistant Commissioner (Staff Development and Information Systems Management)*
- Regional Commissioners:
 - **William J. Sibley**, Boston/New York Regional Commissioner (GS-15)
 - **Vacant**, Philadelphia Regional Commissioner (GS-15)
 - **Janet S. Rankin**, Atlanta Regional Commissioner (GS-15)
 - **Jason S. Palmer**, Chicago Regional Commissioner (GS-15)
 - **Michael C. Hirniak**, Dallas/Kansas City Regional Commissioner (GS-15)
 - **Richard J. Holden**, San Francisco*

**Note: The three Assistant Commissioners for Field Operations serve dual/enhanced roles of Regional Commissioner for a region with elevated nationwide SES duties as detailed above.*

Key Vacancies

The BLS defines a key vacancy as a position classified as SES, Senior-Level (SL), Regional Commissioners, or a PAS position that is unfilled.

As of November 2020, the BLS has six key vacancies: the Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Industrial Prices and Price Indexes, Director for the Directorate for Survey Processing, Senior Statistician, two Assistant Commissioners for Regional Operations, and the

TAB 1: Agency Organizational Overview

Philadelphia Regional Commissioner. The BLS has made significant progress on these vacancies (one of the five selection packages was sent to OPM for approval) and expects to have them filled soon.

TAB 2: State of Play

Key Meetings, Decisions, and Announcements

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) anticipates the following Key Meetings, Decisions, and Announcements:

Upcoming Releases and Meetings

By end of January 2021

- January 8 at 8:30am – Employment Situation release for December 2020
- January 13 at 8:30am – Consumer Price Index (CPI) release for December 2020

By end of February 2021

- February 5 at 8:30am – Employment Situation release for January 2021
- February 10 at 8:30am – CPI release for January 2021

By end of March 2021

- March 5 at 8:30am – Employment Situation release for February 2021
- March 10 at 8:30am – CPI release for February 2021

BLS Release of Principal Federal Economic Indicators (PFEIs)

The BLS issues a range of key economic indicators. Seven of these have been designated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as PFEIs: [The Employment Situation](#), [the CPI](#), [the Producer Price Index \(PPI\)](#), [the U.S. Import and Export Price Index](#), [Productivity and Costs](#), [the Employment Cost Index](#), and [Real Earnings](#).

In issuing these releases, the BLS follows [OMB Statistical Policy Directive Number 3](#), which precludes prerelease distribution of information except under certain very restricted conditions and requires a one-hour separation between the issuance of releases and policy comment on them.

The processing, analyzing, reviewing, and disseminating of the PFEIs take place entirely within the BLS. Physical and computer security procedures are scrupulously followed. All processes can be completed off-site.

The Employment Situation Release

The [Employment Situation release](#) is derived from two separate monthly surveys. The Current Employment Statistics (CES) survey (also known as “the payroll survey” or “the establishment survey”) provides employment, hours, and earnings estimates based on payroll records of employers. The Current Population Survey (CPS), also known as “the labor force survey” or “the household survey,” queries households to obtain a comprehensive body of information on the employment and unemployment experience of the nation’s population, classified by age, sex, race, and a variety of other characteristics.

The *Employment Situation* release includes changes in payroll employment from the CES, with

information by detailed industry classifications. Also included is the national unemployment rate and other labor force indicators, including six alternative measures of labor underutilization. The *Employment Situation* is closely watched by investors, economists, the Federal Reserve, and industry analysts, among others, to assess the strength of the labor market.

The release process for the *Employment Situation*:

1. Data are collected, processed, tabulated, and analyzed. Text of the news release and Commissioner's Statement are prepared and reviewed. Data typically are released on the first Friday of the month, although this can vary.
2. Federal Reserve staff responsible for producing the Industrial Production Index receive employment, hours, and earnings measures for the manufacturing, mining, utilities and publishing industries from CES staff on the Wednesday of the *Employment Situation* release week through a Memorandum of Understanding, which lays out the parameters that must be followed to keep the information secure and confidential until release.
3. Data are provided to the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) on behalf of the President on the day before the data are to be released. Senior program office staff are available to discuss the data by phone with the CEA.
4. At 8 a.m. on the morning of release, the Secretary of Labor may be briefed on the data by BLS staff under lockup conditions monitored by BLS staff. Traditionally, the Secretary includes the Department of Labor (DOL) Chief Economist and other designated members of the Secretary's staff in the briefing, as well as staff from the CEA. All attendees (except the Secretary and Deputy Secretary) are required to sign a roster indicating they will not disclose information prior to release time. In addition, all attendees are required to refrain from using electronic devices (cell phones, etc.) prior to release time.
5. Data are released to the public at 8:30 a.m., via the BLS website and through Twitter. BLS staff are available by telephone and email to provide technical explanations beginning at 8:30 a.m.
6. On the day of the *Employment Situation* release, the Commissioner of Labor Statistics may be requested to testify before the Joint Economic Committee (JEC) of the Congress at 9:30 a.m. When a hearing is held, which has been infrequent in recent years, JEC staff are provided the data at 8 a.m. under lockup conditions monitored by BLS staff.

At 9:30 a.m., the Secretary of Labor and other members of the Executive Branch are permitted to discuss the data and their implications for policy.

Release of Other BLS Principal Federal Economic Indicators

Other BLS PFEIs follow much the same process as the *Employment Situation*, with the following exceptions:

- No data are provided in advance by the BLS to the Federal Reserve.
- Pre-release data from the PPI and the U.S. Import and Export Price Index are not provided to the CEA.
- There are no pre-release briefings for the Secretary of Labor.
- There are no JEC hearings.

More information on BLS releases in CY 2021 can be found here:

https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/pfei_schedule_release_dates_2021.pdf.

BLS Priorities and Issues

The BLS has the following topics that may not require action within 90 days of the Administration change, but of which the transition team should be aware:

1. COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts
2. Lockup
3. Strengthening the CPI
4. DOL Enterprise-Wide Shared Services Initiative
5. National Office Headquarters Relocation and Data Center Establishment
6. Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act

COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced unprecedented challenges to how the BLS operates. In response to the pandemic, BLS leadership has taken steps to maintain the safety of employees, stakeholders, and customers while minimizing the impact to the quality of its products and services.

Impact

The BLS has devoted significant resources to introducing improved website technologies that strengthen the security of our data and expand our network and server capacity. The successful release of the *Employment Situation* and other data products since the pandemic began in March demonstrate that the BLS website can serve thousands of users per second immediately after release time with little or no degradation in response time and a negligible error rate.

The BLS has mandated a maximum telework posture for staff and has suspended in-person data collection and respondent initiation activities. There have been impacts on response rates for some surveys, but the BLS is relying on telephone, email, and internet collection and alternative data to counter the decline in in-person data collection while limiting direct contact with certain industries that are on the front lines of the pandemic, such as hospitals. With these impacts in mind, the BLS expects to continue releases for its statistical programs in FY 2021, with the exception of the American Time Use Survey.

The BLS has strict criteria for publishing data to ensure that the Bureau publishes only high-quality data. In the interest of transparency, the BLS is publishing notes on data quality with its releases and is maintaining a section on its website to address common questions from the public about releases during the pandemic. Also, to maintain production, the BLS is using funding from cancelled activities, such as conferences, outreach, and travel for new investments that support increased telework for Data Collection Center (DCC) contractors, and economists or economic assistants that normally are on-site or in the field. In addition, the BLS has published articles and is adding questions to several surveys to help inform the economic impact from COVID-19.

Important Dates

- In March 2020, the BLS mandated a telework posture for all staff, and suspended all in-

person data collection.

Other DOL Agencies Involved: N/A

Other Federal Agencies Involved: Census Bureau

Last Action Taken on Issue

- In July 2020, the BLS released an addendum to the FY 2020 Operating Plan, describing COVID-19 impacts on current strategies and outcomes.
- Ongoing planning is underway in preparation for an eventual resumption of in-person work, including in-person data collection.

Lockup

Background

The DOL pre-release media lockup began in the 1980s, allowing a limited number of credentialed media outlets access to certain BLS and Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data in advance of the public release. The original goal of providing this access was to serve the general public by expanding the distribution of key economic data and ensuring that news reports about the DOL releases would be accurate. Such expanded distribution is less important today, as the primary method of data release is over the internet, supplemented by social media.

In addition to the BLS and ETA, DOL had allowed the Department of Commerce (BEA and Census Bureau) to utilize the DOL press lockup facility starting in 2013.

Impact

The DOL Office of Inspector General (OIG) has issued two reports expressing concern that pre-release lockups give credentialed press organizations an unfair advantage. The OIG has repeated this concern every six months in its report to Congress. The advantage stems from press organizations spending time formatting data that can immediately be uploaded for trading at the time of public release. Such high-speed/little delay transmission is often referred to as “ultra-low latency”; some lockup attendees advertise such a service. Given this inequity, the OIG recommended that a solution be developed to eliminate any competitive advantage provided to attendees of media lockups, or absent a solution, discontinue the lockup.

Following considerable internal discussion over the years and across Administrations, DOL announced plans in January 2020 to maintain lockups, but to prohibit attendees from using electronics in the lockup facility. This plan provided press organizations with advance time to review release materials, but it eliminated the concern about unfair advantage. The press organizations obtained legal counsel and pushed back against DOL’s plan. This resulted in many discussions between the parties, but in the end, no alternatives were found that would address the OIG concerns.

In mid-March 2020, pre-release lockups had to be suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the suspension period, the press continued to publish their stories without complications and often just as fast as when there was a lockup.

In May 2020, informed by the previous month's experience, DOL announced the permanent discontinuation of pre-release lockups and Commerce chose not to continue early access through other means. Since the announcement, DOL received inquiries from press organizations, lawyers representing the press, and Members of Congress. All of their questions have been answered. DOL has no plans to revisit its decision to discontinue lockups.

Important Dates

- In July 2018, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the elimination of their lockup.
- In January 2020, DOL announced plans to eliminate electronics from the media lockup.
- In March 2020, DOL suspended pre-release media lockups for all releases due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In May 2020, DOL announced that pre-release media lockups would be discontinued permanently, effective June 3, 2020. The discontinuation applies to all DOL and Department of Commerce releases.

Other DOL Agencies Involved: ETA, OCIA, OCIO, OIG, OPA, SOL

Other Federal Agencies Involved: Department of Commerce

Last Action Taken on Issue

On May 19, 2020, the BLS Commissioner Beach announced that, effective June 3, 2020, the Department will permanently discontinue media lockups for all releases regardless of whether the current restrictions in place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic remain necessary as of that date. DOL has responded to all inquiries from the public regarding the lockup discontinuation.

Strengthening the CPI

Background

The CPI serves as the nation's principal gauge of inflation. The CPI is a measure of the average change over time in the prices paid by urban consumers for a market basket of consumer goods and services. Dating back to 1913, it is one of the most widely used statistics in the United States. As a measure of consumer inflation, it is a PFEI as designated by the OMB, and along with other PFEI statistics, it helps describe the current condition of the U.S. economy. It serves as a guide for the Federal Reserve Board's monetary policy and is an essential tool in calculating changes in the nation's output and living standards. It is used to determine annual cost-of-living allowances for Social Security beneficiaries and other recipients of federal payments, to adjust the federal income tax system for inflation, and as the yardstick for U.S. Treasury inflation-indexed bonds among many other uses.

Impact

The objective of the CPI is to measure a conditional cost-of-living index. Given the visibility of the program, the BLS has remained committed to making improvements to the CPI to ensure it meets this measurement objective and to guarantee the high quality of CPI outputs. BLS has continued to research innovative approaches to improve the data into the future. For example, BLS has revised the CPI geographic area sample to reflect changes in population based on the

TAB 2: State of Play

Decennial Census. This, and many other CPI improvements, are documented on the [BLS website](#). The economy continues to change, and the growth of online shopping, ecommerce, and the digitization of the consumer marketplace has created enormous opportunities, but also challenges, for inflation measurement.

Important Dates

- The BLS has contracted with the Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT) to conduct a [Consensus Panel Study](#) on Improving Cost-of-Living Indexes and Consumer Inflation Statistics in the Digital Age. Expected completion is May 31, 2021.
- The ongoing CPI Geographic Area Sample Revision currently is planned to be completed by December 2021.

Other DOL Agencies Involved: N/A

Other Federal Agencies Involved: OMB

Last Action Taken on Issue

Under the above mentioned contract with CNSTAT, the expert panel will identify specific areas where new kinds of data may be harnessed in a relatively straightforward way to improve price measurement of some items such as food and electronics. The panel will also propose solutions for some historically difficult-to-measure expenditure categories, particularly for which the availability of alternative data create opportunities for improved price measurement. Finally, the panel will consider opportunities to mitigate substitution bias in the headline CPI index as well as the index used for Social Security cost-of-living adjustments. As part of that task, the panel will assess the prospects for creating new inflation products that would present information about prices paid and spending for goods and services by households across the income distribution.

DOL Enterprise-Wide Shared Services Initiative

Background

DOL has been implementing in-house reforms since FY 2019, as part of the Administration's Management Agenda to reorganize and improve federal government operations. Many of DOL's administrative activities, including information technology (IT), procurement, human resources, financial management, and personnel security, were previously separated across its subcomponents. The Shared Services initiative is intended to centralize DOL administrative and IT services.

Impact

To date, the DOL Enterprise-Wide Shared Services initiative has resulted in the transition of BLS Human Resources, Procurement, and Personnel Security functions to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management (OASAM), with 48 FTE and associated compensation and benefits funding realigned from the BLS to OASAM. To ensure success, pertinent BLS staff and leadership spent considerable time over the past two years participating in the development and implementation of shared services in these areas. The BLS continues to work with OASAM to ensure future success.

BLS Commissioner Beach is working with OASAM on developing a plan for IT shared services

that would allow for shared services in a manner that ensures compliance with required by the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (CIPSEA) and OMB Statistical Policy Directives.

The confidentiality protections were reinforced with the passage of the Foundations for Evidence-based Policymaking Act of 2018, which reiterated CIPSEA protections and codified the concepts found in OMB’s Statistical Policy Directive #1. That directive states that “Federal statistical agencies and recognized statistical units must be able to conduct statistical activities autonomously when determining what information to collect and process, the physical security and information systems security employed to protect confidential data,... [and] when and how to store and disseminate their statistical products...In order to maintain credibility with data providers and users as well as the public, Federal statistical agencies and recognized statistical units must seek to avoid even the appearance that agency design, collection, processing, editing, compilation, storage, analysis, release, and dissemination processes may be manipulated.” While we await final regulations on implementation of this directive into law, circulated drafts of the regulations indicate that the role of the statistical agency head will be strengthened through this process.

Important Dates

Dates vary and subject to change. Please see Last Action Taken on Issue section.

Other DOL Agencies Involved: OASAM, OCIO

Other Federal Agencies Involved: N/A

Last Action Taken on Issue

- Human Resources: The functions and staff were transferred to OASAM in August 2019.
- Personnel Security: The function and staff were transferred to OASAM in October 2019.
- Procurement: The functions and staff were transferred to OASAM in April 2020.
- The BLS continues discussions with OASAM to determine how the BLS can leverage Enterprise-Wide Shared Services for IT, while ensuring legal and confidentiality requirements are met and risk to mission is avoided.

National Office Headquarters Relocation and Data Center Establishment

Background

The BLS lease on the Postal Square Building (PSB) in Washington, DC, which provides workspace for approximately 1,800 federal staff and contractors, expires in May 2022. The BLS and the OASAM have been working with the GSA and the OMB on the requirements and costs for a new lease for the BLS national office. In addition to the headquarters move, the BLS also is establishing its data center at a shared facility to improve the security and resilience of the BLS IT Infrastructure.

Impact

As part of the 2020 budget process, OMB directed the BLS to co-locate with Census and the BEA in the Suitland Federal Complex (SFC), rather than to enter into a new lease in the current BLS headquarters location or elsewhere in the Central Business District. GSA has been

conducting a Building Assessment Study to determine how the BLS will fit into the SFC, together with the two existing tenants, Census and BEA, and to validate expected costs. This work is ongoing. The BLS received partial funding in FY 2020 (\$27,000,000), which remains available through FY 2024. The FY 2021 President's Budget includes \$13,000,000, which also remains available until September 30, 2024, for the costs requested but not received in FY 2020 for the BLS headquarters move to the SFC. This includes funding for replication of space, furniture, fixtures, and equipment. Costs for construction-related major repairs and alterations to the core shell of the facility were anticipated to be funded separately by GSA, as the BLS will move into GSA-owned space following a GSA-executed repair and alteration project at the SFC. This may change and additional funding may be required for the BLS.

Coinciding with the efforts to move the headquarters to the SFC, the BLS is working on establishing a data center in FY 2021 at an off-site Tier 4 facility. The aim of this plan is to improve the security and resilience of the BLS infrastructure, including the processes that support its release schedule. The establishment of the new data center will utilize an approach that ensures any potential for disruption is minimized.

Important Dates

- In late September 2019, the GSA awarded a contract for a Building Assessment Study to determine how the existing SFC can be reconfigured to accommodate the additional 1,800 BLS federal staff and contractors.
- In mid-FY 2020, the BLS secured space for establishing the data center.
- FY 2021 Congressional Action
- FY 2022 President's Budget: February 2021
- Establish new data center: By the end of FY 2021
- Current PSB lease expires: May 2022

Other DOL Agencies Involved: OASAM

Other Federal Agencies Involved: OMB, Census, BEA, GSA

Last Action Taken on Issue

- The Building Assessment Study and selection of a build-out alternative is ongoing.
- In FY 2020, the BLS received partial funding (\$27,000,000) for the headquarters relocation.
- The FY 2021 President's Budget requests \$13,000,000 for the funds requested but not received in FY 2020. The House bill for FY 2021 is consistent with this request.

Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act

Background

The [*Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018*](#) (P.L. 115-435) recognizes that better use of existing data may improve how government programs operate. The law requires that the head of the statistical agency within the Department, in this case the Commissioner of Labor Statistics, serve as a Statistical Official to advise the entire Department on statistical policy, techniques, and procedures. Further, the statute recodifies the CIPSEA, under which statistical agencies collect information from respondents for exclusively statistical purposes.

Impact

In addition to the Statistical Official, the law requires each Department to designate a Chief Evaluation Officer to coordinate evidence-building activities and a Chief Data Officer to be responsible for data management, privacy and confidentiality, and data access. At DOL, the Chief Evaluation Officer and the Chief Data Officer are part of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy (OASP). The DOL “evidence officials” are identified on [DOL.gov](https://www.dol.gov).

This law recodifies all CIPSEA provisions relating to confidential information protection and statistical efficiency. In addition, the new version codifies the four primary principles from [OMB Statistical Policy Directive No. 1, “Fundamental Responsibilities of Federal Statistical Agencies and Recognized Statistical Units,”](#) which requires agencies to “produce and disseminate relevant and timely information; conduct credible and accurate statistical activities; conduct objective statistical activities; and protect the trust of information providers by ensuring the confidentiality and exclusive statistical use of their responses.” The BLS coordinated the development of regulations implementing these new provisions, working with other statistical agencies. Those regulations are pending at OMB.

This law also created a new [Advisory Committee on Data for Evidence Building](#), which will review, analyze, and make recommendations on how to promote the use of federal data for evidence building. The committee’s duties include assisting the Director of OMB on issues of access to data and providing recommendations on how to facilitate data sharing, data linkage, and privacy enhancing techniques. The first meeting of this advisory committee occurred on October 23, 2020.

Important Dates: N/A

Other DOL Agencies Involved: OASP

Other Federal Agencies Involved: OMB, All Agencies

Last Action Taken on Issue

For DOL, the Commissioner of Labor Statistics was designated Statistical Official. The duties and responsibilities of the Statistical Official are laid out in [OMB memorandum M-19-23](#) on pages 30 and 31.

Major Cooperative Agreements and Contracts

Cooperative Agreements

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) operates the Current Employment Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Occupational Employment Statistics, and Local Area Unemployment Statistics programs in cooperation with the states and territories. These programs compose the BLS Labor Market Information (LMI) Cooperative Statistical Programs. The BLS also works with state partners to operate Occupational Safety and Health Statistics (OSHS) which is comprised of the Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses and the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries.

TAB 2: State of Play

For FY 2020, the BLS awarded \$70 million in LMI cooperative agreements and \$7 million in OSHS cooperative agreements. These funds were awarded to the 50 states and territories in support of the BLS cooperative statistical programs. This funding is awarded on an FY basis.

Contracts

For FY 2020, the BLS awarded \$98 million in contracts (figures taken from [USAspending.gov](https://www.usaspending.gov)); the bulk of these contracts were to support data collection and program operations.

Key Agency Stakeholders

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR



Who we are... The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is the principal federal statistical agency responsible for measuring labor market activity, working conditions, price changes, and productivity in the U.S. economy to support public and private decision making. The BLS serves a broad customer base, which includes businesses, trade associations, unions, media, academia, policymakers and individuals. BLS data affect virtually all Americans because they inform and support public and private decision-making.



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We provide information for...

 PRIVATE CITIZENS	 BUSINESSES	 STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS	 POLICYMAKERS AND RESEARCHERS	 ADVOCACY GROUPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor changes in inflation that may result in adjustments to Social Security, pensions, alimony, rents, and other payments and expenses. <input type="checkbox"/> Make career and educational decisions using occupation data and employment projections. <input type="checkbox"/> Decide where to relocate based on states, metro areas, or major cities with lower unemployment rates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Determine employee wages. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop price escalation clauses for long-term contracts and escalator clauses in collective bargaining agreements using inflation statistics. <input type="checkbox"/> Manage turnover rates by comparing compensation packages with nationwide averages. <input type="checkbox"/> Compare injury and illness rates to industry averages, which aid in the applications for grants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Use inflation data to adjust minimum wage levels in ten states. <input type="checkbox"/> Market state and local areas to prospective employers using local labor force composition data. <input type="checkbox"/> Create state occupational health indicators used in the allocation of states' public health resources. <input type="checkbox"/> Analyze potential business and economic losses in disaster areas using employment and wage data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Assess the strength of the U.S. economy. <input type="checkbox"/> Analyze pay and employer-provided benefits including sick leave. <input type="checkbox"/> Understand inflationary pressures in prices and wages. <input type="checkbox"/> Track effects of changes in productivity due to technological advances in industries. <input type="checkbox"/> Measure changes in the prices of goods and services traded between the U.S. and the rest of the world. <input type="checkbox"/> Determine the gender wage gap and the public-private pay gap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Analyze labor market behaviors of veterans, people with disabilities, minority groups, and disadvantaged populations in the workforce. <input type="checkbox"/> Assess extent of union membership. <input type="checkbox"/> Measure men's and women's contributions to household production and childcare activities and how this is changing over time. <input type="checkbox"/> Understand work stoppages and identify labor dispute issues.



We provide essential information for...

making informed federal policy decisions. Federal agencies rely on BLS data to carry out their mission of serving the American public. From adjusting Social Security benefits of retirees to ensuring the pay of our men and women in the armed services keeps up with inflation, these are just a few ways in which BLS data are used in federal funding allocations to move dollars and affect lives.



FEDERAL RESERVE

The Federal Reserve operates under a "dual mandate" to maintain stable prices and promote maximum employment. To help achieve these goals the Fed uses BLS data, such as inflation statistics and nonfarm payrolls, as key inputs during the policy decision-making process and as a way to measure the effectiveness of Federal Reserve policy actions.



SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Social Security benefits are revised annually on the basis of changes in inflation. In 2019, more than 64 million Americans received \$1 trillion in Social Security payments. Accuracy is important. Consider that a 1.0 percentage point annual increase in inflation would increase Social Security outlays by more than \$10 billion per year.



INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

The federal tax income brackets and personal exemption amounts are tied to annual changes in inflation. Net federal taxes collected are directly dependent on changes in inflation. Income eligibility thresholds for the Earned Income Tax Credit are also adjusted annually based on inflation data. The IRS calculates the standard state and local general sales tax deductions using consumer expenditure data.



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Eligibility requirements for need-based programs – such as the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) – are updated annually based upon changes in inflation. Consumer expenditure data are used in the USDA's annual Cost of Raising a Child report.



HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Inflation data are used to update the Medicare Prospective Payments System, including payment amounts for professional fees and fees paid to hospices, and to determine allocations for Medicare and Medicaid payouts. Household estimates are used for the Children's Health Insurance Program (approximately \$17.5 billion in 2018).



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Inflation statistics help the Department of Defense make recommendations for active-duty military pay. Consumer expenditure data are used to update the U.S. cost of living allowances (COLAs) in U.S. military locations.

TAB 3: Calendar

Below are the seven Principal Federal Economic Indicators (PFEIs) that the BLS will release from October 2020 to December 2021.

PFEI	Release Dates
<i>Employment Situation</i>	October 2, November 6, December 4, January 8, February 5, March 5, April 2, May 7, June 4, July 2, August 6, September 3, October 8, November 5, December 3
Consumer Price Index	October 13, November 12, December 10, January 13, February 10, March 10, April 13, May 12, June 10, July 13, August 11, September 14, October 13, November 10, December 10
Producer Price Index	October 14, November 13, December 11, January 15, February 17, March 12, April 9, May 13, June 15, July 14, August 12, September 10, October 14, November 9, December 14
U.S. Import and Export Price Indexes	October 15, November 17, December 15, January 14, February 18, March 16, April 14, May 14, June 16, July 15, August 13, September 15, October 15, November 16, December 15
Productivity and Costs	November 5, December 8, February 4, March 4, May 6, June 3, August 10, September 2, November 4, December 7
Employment Cost Index	October 30, January 29, April 30, July 30, October 29
Real Earnings	October 13, November 12, December 10, January 13, February 10, March 10, April 13, May 12, June 10, July 13, August 11, September 14, October 13, November 10, December 10

See also <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/pfei-schedule-release-dates-2021.pdf>.

TAB 3: Calendar

Regular Convenings	Date
<p>BLS Technical Advisory Committee (BLSTAC) – BLSTAC advises the BLS Commissioner of statistical and other technical matters related to the collection and analysis of BLS data.</p>	<p>BLSTAC expects to meet two times each year. The next two meeting dates are set for November 20, 2020, and May 21, 2021. The November meeting will be virtual.</p>
<p>Data Users Advisory Committee (DUAC) – DUAC provides points of view of data users from various sectors of the U.S. economy on matters related to the analysis, dissemination, and use of the Bureau’s statistics, on published reports, and on data gaps or the need for new Bureau statistics.</p>	<p>DUAC expects to meet twice during FY 2021. The next two meeting dates are set for November 10, 2020, and May 20, 2021. The November meeting will be virtual.</p>
<p>Federal Economic Statistics Advisory Committee (FESAC) – FESAC advises the Directors of the Bureau of Economic Analysis and Census, and the BLS Commissioner on statistical methodology and other technical matters related to the collection, tabulation, and analysis of federal economic statistics.</p>	<p>FESAC expects to meet twice in FY 2021. The next meeting date is December 11, 2020. The December meeting will be virtual. The second FY 2021 meeting is not scheduled yet.</p>

TAB 4: BUDGET

BUDGET AUTHORITY AND FTE SUMMARY (Dollars in millions)

	FY 2017 Enacted	FY 2018 Enacted	FY 2019 Enacted	FY 2020 Enacted 1/	FY 2021 Request 2/
Budget Authority	\$609.0	\$612.0	\$615.0	\$655.0	\$658.3
FTE	2,185	2,022	2,057	1,941	1,977

1/ The FY 2020 Enacted level includes \$27.0 million in one-time partial funding for relocation the BLS national office to Suitland, Maryland.

2/ The FY 2021 Request includes an additional \$13.0 million to support relocating the BLS national office.

At-A-Glance

- Funds for the BLS are appropriated on an annual basis. The agency is funded through the General Fund, the Unemployment Trust Fund (UTF), and through reimbursable agreements (see below for more information about BLS reimbursable authority).
- BLS' share of the UTF is \$68.0 million as of FY 2020. The BLS uses the UTF to fund cooperative agreements with its state partners to operate the Current Employment Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Occupational Employment Statistics, and Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) programs.
- BLS' reimbursable authority allows the agency to, upon request, complete special statistical work. The amount of reimbursable funding varies from year to year based on the projects requested and funded. In FY 2021, BLS anticipates having reimbursable agreements totaling about \$41 million, of which nearly \$35 million is from the Social Security Administration (SSA) for producing occupational data for use in the SSA's disability programs.

Budget and FTE Trends

- The FY 2020 Enacted level provides partial, one-time funding of \$27.0 million for relocating the BLS Headquarters to Suitland, Maryland where the Census Bureau and the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) are located, due to the BLS National Office lease expiring in May 2022. Consistent with the Joint Explanatory Statement, the remaining \$13.0 million increase over FY 2019 Enacted will enable the BLS to meet the additional mandate to "rebuild capacity" including (1) restoring LAUS for New England Minor Civil Divisions with populations less than 1,000, (2) providing an annual Current Population Survey (CPS) supplement with collection of data on contingent and alternative work arrangements in alternating years, and (3) initiating spending on the planning and developing of a new National Longitudinal Surveys (NLS) cohort.
- The FY 2021 President's Budget proposes \$658.3 million in funding for the BLS, which includes an additional \$13.0 million to support relocating the BLS national office. In addition, the BLS request for FY 2021 includes \$7.1 million to improve the Job Openings

and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) by expanding the sample to produce sample-based state estimates and more detailed industry data for the nation as a whole, accelerating data review and the production of estimates, and adding focused questions to provide more information about job openings, hires, and separations; as well as \$7.1 million to research the nature and construction of a potential consumption-based poverty measure and improve the Consumer Expenditure (CE) program in support of improved poverty measurement.

Upcoming Issues

- The GSA has been conducting a Building Assessment Study to determine how the BLS will fit into the Suitland Federal Complex (SFC), together with the two existing tenants, Census and the BEA, and to validate expected costs. This work is ongoing, and costs that were anticipated to be funded separately by the GSA, may change and additional funding might be required for the BLS.
- The House minibus containing the FY 2021 Labor/HHS/Education funding bill continues to fund the BLS at \$655.0 million.
- The House funding bill includes the \$13 million requested for the headquarters relocation, but encourages the BLS to prioritize implementing a new NLS Youth cohort and supporting the CPS supplement before undertaking any new work for JOLTS and CE.
- As of October 30, 2020, the Senate has not made any funding recommendations for FY 2021 appropriations.

Reports/Audits/Evaluations

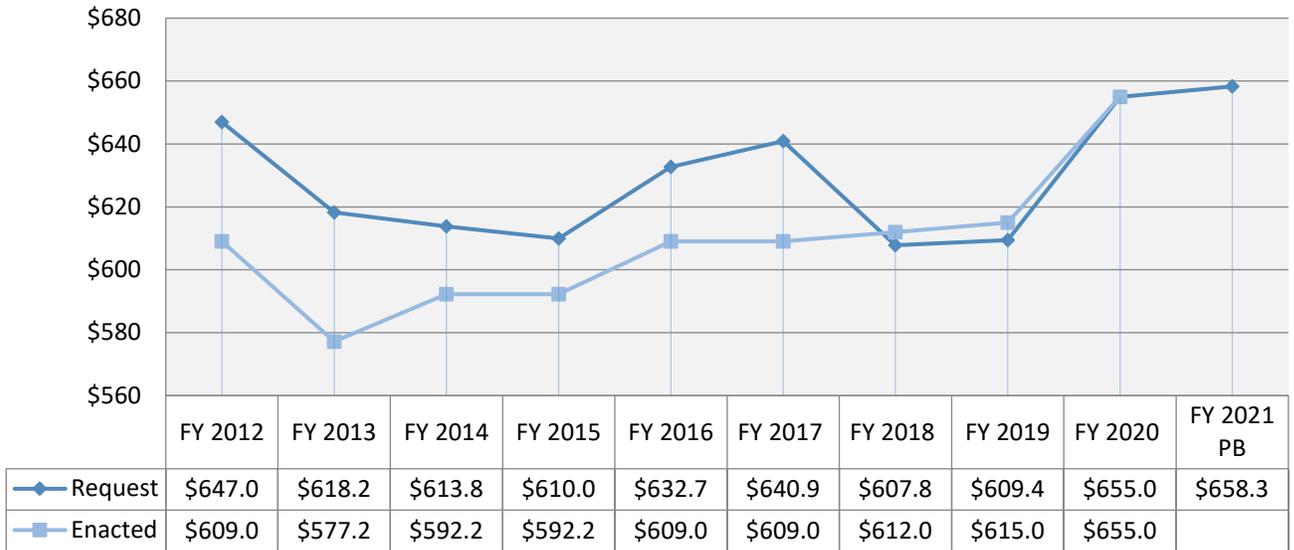
- The Office of Inspector General (OIG) issued the FY 2020 Office of Audit Workplan that includes a planned audit on BLS survey response rates. The focus of this audit will be to determine how the BLS has incorporated new methodologies and technology into its data collection process to ensure expected response rates and reduced respondent burden. This audit has not commenced.

Staff Contacts

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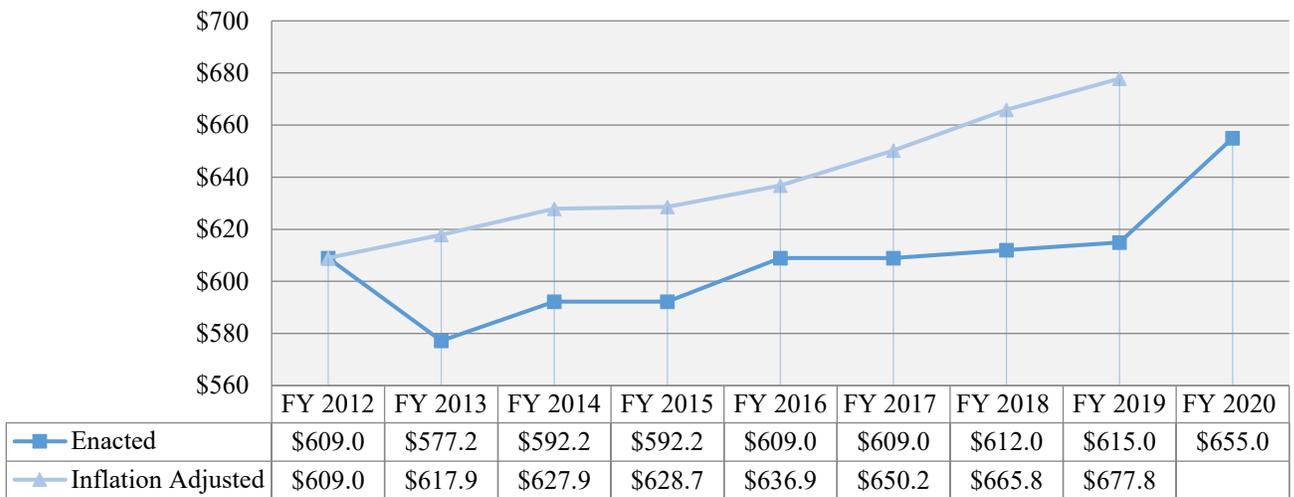
Bureau of Labor Statistics

Request vs. Enacted, FY 2012-FY 2021
(Dollars in millions)



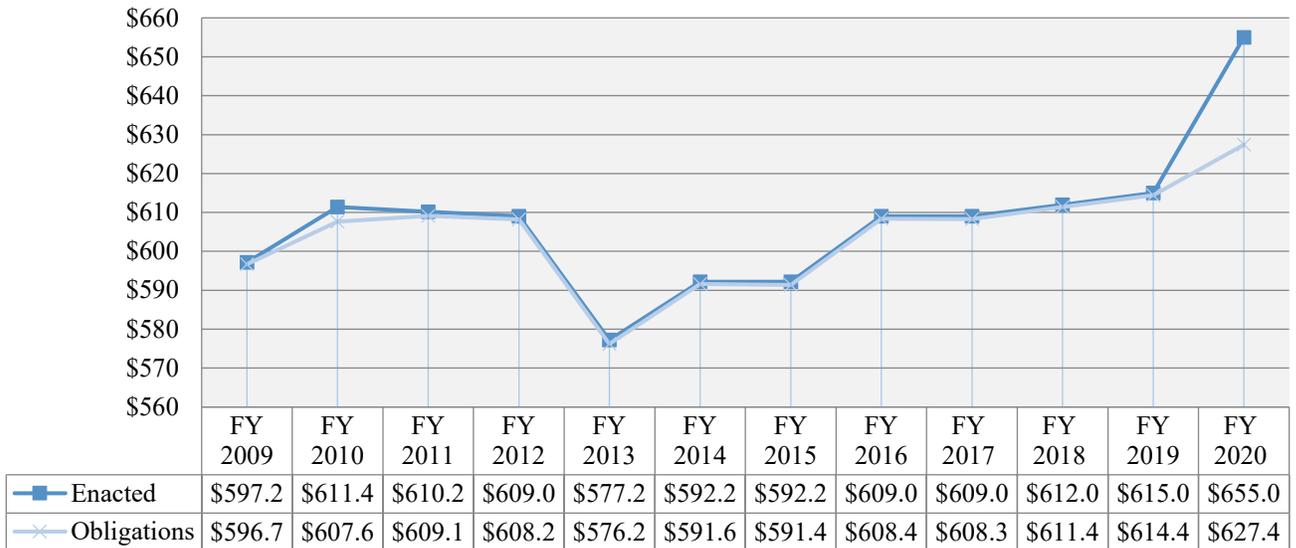
Bureau of Labor Statistics

FY 2012 Inflation Adjusted BA vs. FY 2012-FY 2020
Enacted BA
(Dollars in millions)



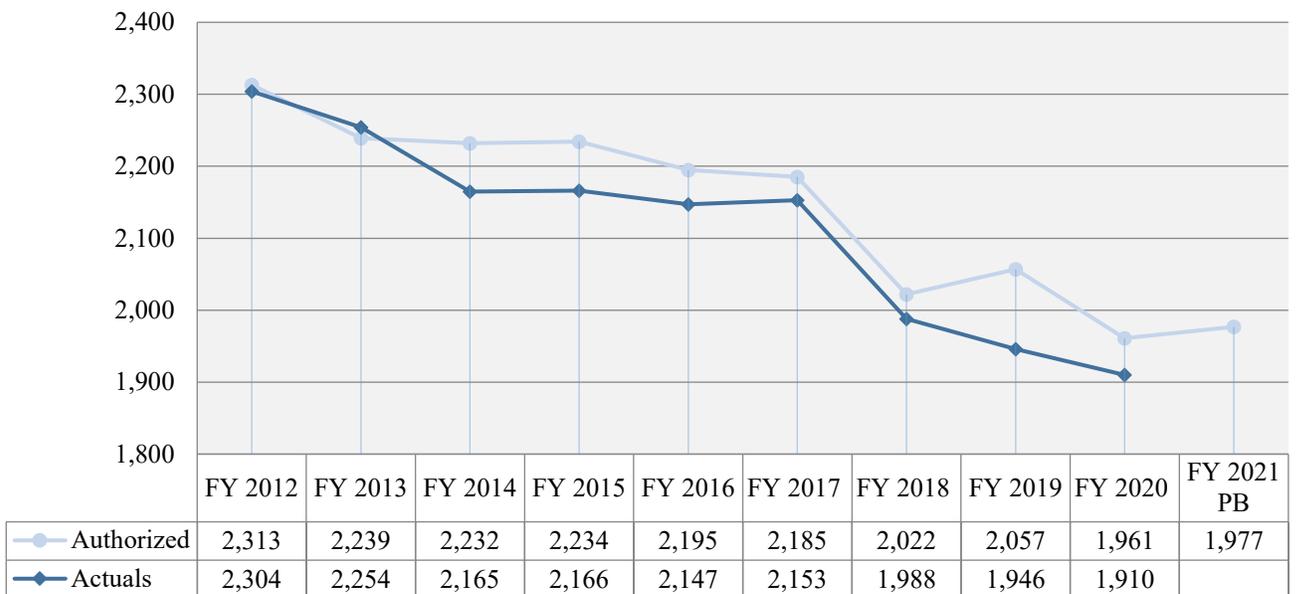
Bureau of Labor Statistics

Budget Authority vs. Obligations, FY 2009-FY 2020
(Dollars in millions)



Bureau of Labor Statistics

Authorized FTE vs. Actuals, FY 2012-2021



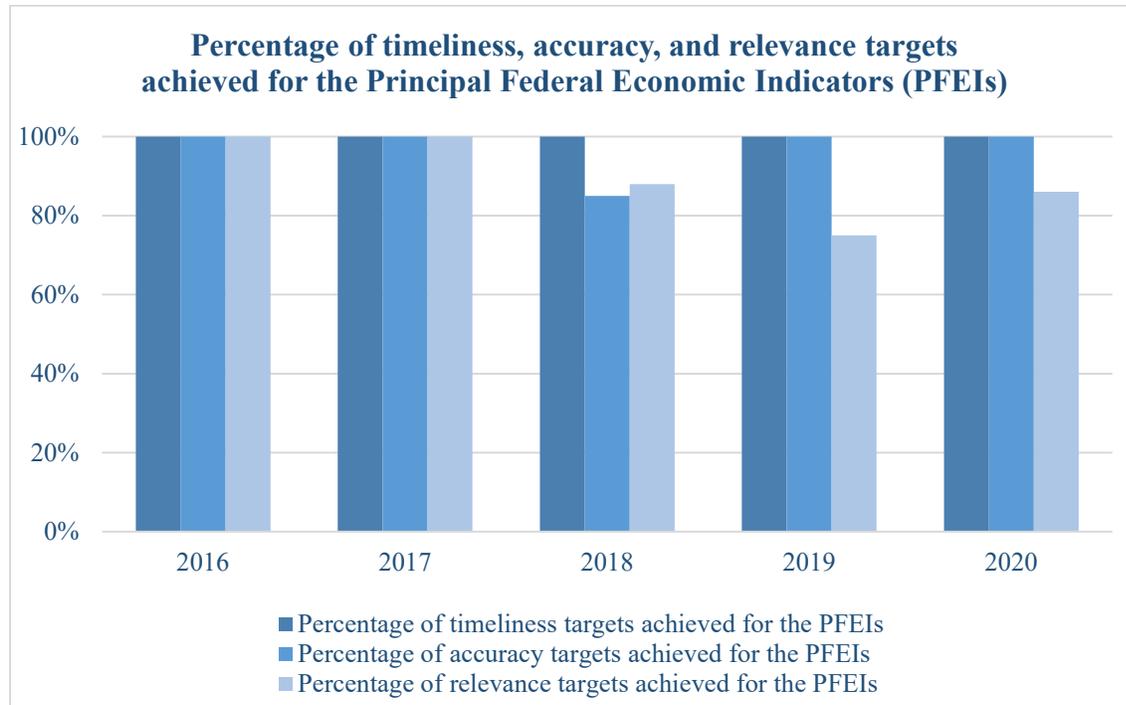
Note:

TAB 4: Budget

- FTE lapse was due to budgetary constraints and late timing of enacted appropriations. Despite this, the BLS shifted funding from unused personnel compensation and benefits resources to address non-personnel costs, avoiding significant lapses in spending.
- FY 2020 reflects the apportioned FTE ceiling. The Enacted ceiling after a comparative transfer of shared services is 1,941.

TAB 5: Agency Performance

The BLS conforms to the conceptual framework of the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy’s (ICSP) Guidelines for Reporting Performance by Statistical Agencies and the “Strengthening Federal Statistics” chapter of the Analytical Perspectives volume in the President’s Budget. The BLS measures accuracy, timeliness, relevance, dissemination, and mission achievement, and also reports the full cost to produce its data products. These six criteria are common among statistical agencies because they represent critical aspects of a statistical program’s performance.



Over the last five years, the BLS reached 100 percent of the underlying *timeliness*, *accuracy*, and *relevance* targets for its PFEIs, with only four exceptions.⁵ The BLS regularly evaluates its targets in the interest of continuous improvement and undertakes projects aimed at improving the timeliness, accuracy, and relevance of BLS products and processes, including the development of new products and expansion of existing ones. For example, in FY 2020, the Producer Price Index published, on an experimental basis, new indexes in the net inputs to industry data series including an import component based upon International Price Program data.

Additionally, the BLS continues working to accelerate the timeliness of its data releases. For example, from 2010 to 2020, the BLS accelerated the following data releases, further improving timeliness:

- Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages – Between 2010 and 2017, accelerated publication of county, Metropolitan Statistical Area, state, and national employment and wages by a total of four weeks.

⁵ OMB designates seven economic indicators which the BLS issues as PFEIs: *Employment Situation*, Consumer Price Index, Producer Price Index, U.S. Import and Export Price Indexes, Productivity and Costs, Employment Cost Index, and Real Earnings.

TAB 5: Agency Performance

- Employment Projections – Between 2016 and 2019, accelerated release of employment projections by four months and, in 2019, released employment projections for the first time on an annual basis rather than a biennial basis.
- Consumer Expenditure Survey – In 2015, accelerated release by nearly one month.
- National Compensation Survey – In 2015, accelerated release of data on employer health and retirement plan provisions by eight months.
- Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries – In 2016, accelerated release of final data by four months.
- Labor Productivity – In 2016, accelerated release of final labor productivity measures by two months and improved release of measures of services by one month.
- Multifactor Productivity – In 2016, accelerated release of trends in private business sector multifactor productivity by two months.