

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Current statistics on employment and unemployment are compiled from household interviews, payroll reports from employers, and administrative statistics of unemployment insurance systems. Data from these different sources give valuable insights into various aspects of the labor market. The household survey gives an unduplicated count of individuals who are employed or unemployed and detailed information on their personal characteristics such as age, sex, color, and marital status. The payroll reports give detailed estimates of nonagricultural employment, hours and earnings, by industry and geographic locality. Data from the unemployment insurance systems yield geographic detail on the total number of workers drawing unemployment compensation under State unemployment insurance programs. These three series require different definitions, concepts, and methods of measurement. Because of this and because of sampling variability, response or reporting errors, and administrative factors, month-to-month changes shown by the series may differ.

Following is a brief description of each series. For more detail, see Employment and Earnings of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and publications of the Bureau of Employment Security.

The sample survey of households, collected and tabulated by the Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, for the Bureau of Labor Statistics, provides a comprehensive measure of the labor force, i.e., the total number of persons 14 years of age and over who are employed or unemployed. The information is obtained from a scientifically selected sample of about 35,000 interviewed households in 333 areas throughout the country and is based on the activity or status reported by surveyed persons for the calendar week ending nearest the 15th day of the month.

The sample survey of employers provides estimates of the number of employees on the payrolls in nonagricultural establishments, by industry. Statistics on employment of production or nonsupervisory workers, average weekly hours and average hourly and weekly earnings are also available for a large number of industries.

The figures are based on reports from a sample of establishments employing approximately 25 million workers. The employee figures include all persons who received pay from nonagricultural establishments during the payroll period ending nearest the 15th of the month.

Administrative statistics of unemployment insurance systems furnish a complete count of insured unemployment among the two-thirds of the Nation's labor force covered by unemployment insurance programs.

Weekly reports, by State, are issued on the number of initial claims, the volume and rate of insured unemployment under State unemployment insurance programs, and the volumes under the programs of unemployment compensation for Federal employees, for veterans, and for ex-servicemen. These statistics are published by the Bureau of Employment Security, U.S. Department of Labor in "Unemployment Insurance Claims."

Concepts and Definitions

Employment Data

The employed total from the household survey includes all wage and salary workers and self-employed persons who worked at all during the survey week or who had jobs or businesses from which they were temporarily absent because of illness, vacation, industrial dispute, or various other reasons, regardless of whether pay was received. It also includes unpaid workers in family-operated enterprises who worked 15 or more hours during the survey week. Employed persons include those working in agriculture, or in nonagricultural industries; those holding more than one job are counted only once and are classified according to the job at which they worked the greatest number of hours during the survey week.

Payroll employment from the employer survey includes nonfarm wage and salary workers who received pay for any part of the pay period. Persons on paid sick leave, paid holiday, or paid vacation are included, but those on leave without pay for the entire payroll period are excluded.