ABOUT THE DATA:

The Bureau of Labor Statistics allows authorized researchers to access this data on site in Washington, D.C. Information on this program is included below (current as of 02 April 2010); please see http://www.bls.gov/bls/blsresda.htm for the most recent information.

RUNNING THESE PROGRAMS:

To analyze the data for a specific item, execute ITEM_<NAME OF ITEM>.SAS.

To analyze the data for all items, execute RUNALL.SAS.

Please be aware that specific references to confidential data have been censored in these programs.

DESCRIPTION OF SAS FILES:

TABLESTOBUILD.SAS
Select which procedures to run by commenting out lines. All runs reference this file.

TOOLS.SAS, PTOOLS.SAS
Miscellaneous macro tools.

CREATE_FILES.SAS
Prepares output files, defines certain regression variables, etc.

FIGURE_1.SAS
Calculates percentages of observations associated with each outlet type over time.

TABLE_2.SAS
Calculates for alternative indexes.

TABLE_3_4.SAS
Regresses price on date and store type; then on date, store type, and specifications; then on date, store type, and specifications excepting size.

TABLE_5.SAS
Summarizes average product sizes.

TABLE_6.SAS
Decomposes outlet effects by store type.

VERIFY_STATS_PT1.SAS, VERIFY_STATS_PT2.SAS
Generates certain summary numbers such as the total number of outlets, etc.

DESCRIPTION OF EXCEL FILES:

DISCOUNTS.XLSW
Contains item-specific worksheets created by TABLE_3_4.SAS. Produces Table 3 and 4 price differentials.

LOGINDEXES.XLSW
Contains item-specific worksheets created by TABLE_2.SAS. Produces Table 2 index results.

LOGCONTRIBS.XLSW
Contains item-specific worksheets created by TABLE_6.SAS. Produces Table 6 outlet effect decompositions.

FIGURE1.XLSW
Data produced by FIGURE_1.SAS. Produces Figure 1 share distribution.

PCTLS.XLSW
Contains item-specific worksheets created by TABLE_5.SAS. Produces Table 5 size distribution statistics.

Researcher Access to Confidential Data Files at the Bureau of Labor Statistics

About the Program

Available Data

Who Can Apply?

Research Proposal Guidelines

Application Deadlines

Facilities Available Onsite

Contacting BLS for More Information

About the Program

This webpage provides information on the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) onsite researcher program. The onsite program allows access to confidential microdata to eligible researchers for approved statistical analysis. Researchers are encouraged to apply for access as early as possible.

Federal employees and contractors of the Federal government seeking access to confidential BLS data for statistical analysis should contact Beth McLean as a different application process applies. Researchers are encouraged to discuss their projects with the appropriate BLS contacts prior to submitting an application to the BLS. This program allows approved researchers workspace at the BLS national office in Washington, D.C., where all work with confidential data must take place. The application procedures outlined on this webpage apply to onsite research only.

Available Data

The BLS strives to make available to the public the maximum amount of information possible without compromising the confidentiality pledged to survey respondents. The BLS is legally bound to protect from disclosure individually identifiable data collected for exclusively statistical purposes under a pledge of confidentiality. Please see the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (PDF) for more information. Depending on the data involved, other laws, such as the Privacy Act, the Trades Secret Act, and the Workforce Investment Act, also may be applicable.

Due to such confidentiality constraints, publicly available data sometimes are insufficient to meet researcher needs. The BLS has opportunities available on a limited basis (1) for researchers to access confidential data for purposes of conducting valid statistical analyses. Eligible researchers may apply for access to confidential data from the following surveys and administrative databases.

Data Available For Onsite Research

Data on employment and unemployment:

- National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLS79) Zip Code and Census Tract Files
- National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLS97) Zip Code and Census Tract File
- NLS79 School Surveys
- NLS97 School Surveys
- National Longitudinal Surveys Original Cohorts: Mature and Young Women, and Older and Young Men files with Geographic Variables (2)
- 1993 and 1995 Surveys of Employer Provided Training
- Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program, and the associated Longitudinal Database of Establishments covered by State Unemployment Insurance Programs (1) (3)
- Occupational Employment Statistics Survey
- Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey
- Mass Layoff Statistics

Data on prices and living conditions: (1)

- Consumer Expenditure Surveys
- Producer Price Indexes
- Consumer Price Indexes
- International Price Program

Data on compensation and working conditions:

- National Compensation Survey and its predecessors, including:

Employment Cost Index

Employer Costs for Employee Compensation

Occupational Compensation Survey

Industry Wage Surveys

Area Wage Surveys

Employee Benefits Surveys

- Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses
  - Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries

Data Available For Offsite Research

Please note that the application procedures outlined on this webpage are for onsite data access only. ***Different application procedures apply to offsite access.***

- National Longitudinal Surveys Geocode Data
  - Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries

Who Can Apply?

Researchers may be eligible to access confidential BLS data files for statistical research if they meet certain qualifications. To qualify, you must satisfy the following two requirements:

- ***Either*** be a citizen of the United States, or be a citizen of an eligible country as determined by the State Department. Non-citizens must contact the BLS at Beth McLean to determine their eligibility prior to submitting an application as other complications may be a factor. Applications received from non-citizens may take significantly longer to process.

- ***Either*** be enrolled as a student at least half time in an eligible educational institution, or be employed by one of the following organizations (4):

An institution of higher education

An eligible nonprofit organization (IRS 501c(1) or 501c(3) organizations)

A State, local, or Indian tribal government

An association of State or local public officials

An organization representing member State or local governments

A Federally funded research and development center

Confidential BLS data are available for research that is exclusively statistical, with appropriate controls to protect the data from unauthorized disclosure. Researchers granted access will be responsible for adhering to the confidentiality policies of BLS.

Once an application is approved, the researcher and his or her employer or educational institution must enter into a written legal agreement with the BLS. **The terms and conditions of such agreements are non-negotiable**. Contact the BLS at Beth McLean to obtain a sample agreement.

Researchers coming to the BLS to perform statistical research will not be compensated by the BLS for their work or any associated expenses, such as traveling or living expenses.

Researchers will be subject to a security background check, known as the National Agency Check with Inquiries (NACI).

Research Proposal Guidelines

Applicants are encouraged to contact the BLS to determine the availability of data and the feasibility of their project prior to submitting proposals. Research projects must meet the following four criteria:

- Be exclusively statistical in nature
- Have technical merit
- Be of significant interest to the BLS
- Further the mission of the BLS

Research proposals should be between 5 and 10 pages. They should include the following information:

1. An abstract summarizing the hypothesis to be tested, the data set involved, relevant variables, the empirical methods to be used, and the data outputs that will result from the project. (The abstract should be no longer than 300 words.)

2. A literature review including brief discussion of how the proposed research contributes to the existing body of research

3. The hypothesis that will be tested

4. The data set and variables that will be used in the analysis

5. The empirical methods that will be used

6. The specific data outputs that will result from the project, including a description of whether the research results will be presented as descriptive statistics or frequencies, or via multivariate analysis such as regression coefficients

7. An explanation of why the research requires use of non-public data

8. An explanation of why the research is of interest to the BLS and how it furthers the agency's mission

In addition to the research proposal, applications should include the following information:

1. A description of how the research will be presented, such as in a doctoral dissertation, journal article, or book

2. The source of funding for the project (if any)

3. A statement as to whether the work will be conducted in collaboration with researchers from other organizations

4. A timeline detailing access dates at the BLS, the frequency and duration of visits, and an estimate of the total length of time needed to complete the project. (All projects are of limited duration, with a maximum time period of two years. At the end of the project, researchers may submit written proposals for an extension of time in which to access the data. If resources are available, access may be granted for an additional time not to exceed an additional two years. Researchers should contact the BLS at Beth McLean to determine the appropriate time frame for their project. Note that final revisions and journal submissions must be completed prior to an agreement's end date.)

5. Resumes that include descriptions of the professional background and relevant research record of each individual who will access the data

6. Answers to the Researcher Supplemental Questions form (A zip file utility is necessary to extract this file. See http:/www.bls.gov/bls/blszip.htm.)

Application Deadlines

The BLS has four application deadlines each year:

- **January 15th**

- **April 15th**
- **July 15th**
- **October 15th**

Applications may be accepted in advance but will not be reviewed or processed until after the next application deadline. **Generally, it takes approximately three months after the application deadline to receive approval for research proposals (5). Once a proposal is approved, it can take an additional three months to process and fully execute the legal agreement authorizing data access between the BLS and the recipient organization.** Researchers should factor these estimates into their timetable for beginning research.

All applications should be submitted electronically (in Word or PDF files). Please do not email "zip" files, as these will be automatically rejected by the BLS email screening mechanism. Applications should be sent to Beth McLean.

Facilities Available Onsite

Accepted researchers will be assigned a member of the BLS staff who will be available to answer questions about the data files and assist with computer set up. No other research assistance is provided.

To protect the confidentiality of the data, researchers are not permitted to store confidential data files on their own computer equipment. The BLS will provide an IBM-compatible PC subject to the following four conditions:

1. The PC will be either stand-alone or connected to an internal server where the confidential data files are stored.

2. Each PC will be equipped with PC SAS. The server will be equipped both with SAS and Stata statistical software. On a case-by-case basis, a researcher *may* be permitted to load his or her own statistical software onto the PC or server provided that licensing agreements are observed.

3. BLS PCs will not provide access to e-mail or the Internet.

4. BLS staff will review all printouts, disks, reports, and other project outputs to ensure that data confidentiality is protected.

Although researchers are allowed to bring microdata into the BLS national office for merging to confidential BLS microdata, any resulting merged microdata sets (with or without identifiers) are considered confidential and must remain onsite at the BLS national office.

Visiting researchers may bring their own laptops to conduct outside work and to connect to the internet. **BLS data may not be transferred to or stored on personal laptops at any time.** Please review the following policy statement: Visiting Researcher Policy on Laptops and Internet.

Contacting BLS for More Information

The following individuals may be contacted to obtain more information about the available data in their respective subject areas.

- **For data on employment and unemployment:**

Mark Loewenstein, Senior Research Economist
Employment Research and Program Development Staff
Room 4945
US Bureau of Labor Statistics
2 Massachusetts Avenue NE
Washington, DC 20212
(202) 691-7385
loewenstein.mark@bls.gov

- **For data on prices and living conditions:**

Robert McClelland, Senior Research Economist
Division of Price and Index Number Research
Room 3105
US Bureau of Labor Statistics
2 Massachusetts Avenue NE
Washington, DC 20212
(202) 691-6597
mcclelland.robert@bls.gov

- **For data on compensation and working conditions:**

Anthony Barkume, Senior Research Economist

Compensation Research and Program Development Group

Room 4120

US Bureau of Labor Statistics

2 Massachusetts Avenue NE

Washington, DC 20212

(202) 691-7527

barkume.anthony@bls.gov

NOTES:

1 BLS may only accept as many research projects as its limited resources (space, computer facilities, staff time, etc.) can accommodate. The summer months, mid-May through the end of August, and mid-December through mid-January are peak times for onsite research.

At the present time the BLS is delaying additional access to the confidential data files of the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program as well all programs in the Office of Prices and Living Conditions (OPLC) due to the large number of research projects currently being undertaken with these microdata. When ongoing projects are nearing completion, BLS will again allow researchers to access QCEW and OPLC program data. Researchers are free to submit applications. When access to QCEW and OPLC program data resumes, researchers will be admitted in the order that their projects have been approved.

2 Access to confidential NLS Original Cohorts geographic data for statistical research involves a different application process than what is outlined on this webpage. For further information on how to obtain access to the NLS Original Cohorts geographic data, please contact the NLS program by email.

3 Access to the confidential microdata of the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages program is considered only for research projects that do not involve tabular output. Proposals from Federal agencies for access to the QCEW data for research projects that involve tabular output will be considered.

4 Foreign institutions are limited to non-profits and institutions of higher education.

Researchers applying from foreign institutions should contact the BLS at Beth McLean to determine their eligibility prior to submitting an application as other complications may be a factor. Applications received from foreign institutions may take significantly longer to process. Researchers from international organizations (for example: the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the United Nations) should contact Beth McLean to determine eligibility for this program.

5 Applications for access to Consumer Expenditure Surveys (CEX) data take longer because they must be approved by both the BLS and the U.S. Census Bureau.

Last Modified Date: November 18, 2009