



Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS)

Frequently Asked Questions

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U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

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National Office

Office of Publications

Job Openings &
Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS)

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What is the Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS)?

JOLTS is a monthly count of job openings, hires, quits, layoffs and discharges, and other separations. JOLTS data help measure the demand for labor (employers' need for employees) and track the health of the economy.

What is the reference period for each count?

Employment: the pay period that includes the 12th of the month
Job Openings: the last business day of the month
Hires: the entire month
Quits, Layoffs and Discharges, and Other Separations: the entire month

Why are there different reference periods for each of the counts?

The reference period for employment is the government standard for collecting employment information from businesses. The one-day reference for job openings gives a snapshot of the need for employees in different parts of the economy and allows the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to monitor change over time. Monthly counts of hires and separations show the movement of people into and out of the job market.

What is the pay period that includes the 12th of the month?

The pay period that includes the 12th of the month is the time unit (for example, week or month) that you use to pay your employees that includes the 12th of the month. The length of the pay period does not matter, so long as the 12th of the month is included in the pay period.

What is the Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS)?

My establishment's pay period begins on Monday and ends on Friday. What if the 12th of the month falls on a weekend?

If the 12th of the month falls on a Saturday, count it as the last day of the pay period, and if the 12th of the month falls on a Sunday, count it as the first day of the pay period.

An employee did not work during October. However, he received his paycheck during the week that included October 12th for work performed in September. Should this employee be counted in total employment for October?

No, what matters is whether the employee worked or was on paid leave during the pay period that included the 12th of the month. It does not matter when paychecks are issued.

What if I pay my employees in different payroll cycles?

If your establishment has more than one payroll cycle (for example weekly and semi-monthly), add the total employment for each payroll's pay period that includes the 12th of the month.

When is the last business day of the month?

The last business day of the month is the last day of the month on which an establishment is "open." It may or may not be the same as the last day of the calendar month. Determination of the last business day of the month is independent of the payroll cycle—for example, the last business day does not fall in the following calendar month, even if the pay period goes into the next month.

I have jobs that are always open. Should I report them?

If you are actively recruiting to fill these positions, and if the work can begin within 30 days, report these openings.



Reporting Other Separations

One manager retired from a grocery store on July 28th. Another manager transferred from the dairy division to the meat division within the same store on July 16th.

How many other separations should the grocery store report for July?

The retirement is counted in other separations, as specified on the JOLTS data reporting form. However, the transfer is not counted because it occurred within the same grocery store. Both employees should be counted in total employment for July *if* they worked during or received pay for the pay period that included July 12th.

The grocery store had 1 other separation in July.



We're recruiting now to fill a position that will begin in three months. Do I report the position as a job opening?

No, report only those job openings for work that could start within 30 days.

We're actively recruiting to fill a position, but we don't think we'll find the right candidate within 30 days. Should I report the job opening?

Yes, because work could start within 30 days if you find a suitable candidate.

A candidate accepted our offer of employment but won't start until next month. Do I report this position as a job opening? What about a hire?

Once the offer is accepted, the position is no longer counted as a job opening. However, it is not a hire until the employee actually reports for work.

An employee transferred from one department to another at this location. Should I count the employee as a hire?

No, internal transfers, promotions, and demotions are not hires or separations.

A person worked here for only one day. Should I count that person?

Yes, count the employee as a hire and as the appropriate type of separation. Also, if the person worked during the pay period that included the 12th of the month, count the person in the employment total.

When employees do not show up for work and do not call in to officially quit, how do I classify them?

Usually employees who just stop coming to work are quits. However, if your policy is to call these employees discharges instead of quits, you should report them as layoffs and discharges.

We hire the same seasonal workers every year. Do I have to report them as hired and separated each year?

Yes, include seasonal employees as hires and then as layoffs and discharges each time, even if you use the same workers every year.

What is a Professional Employer Organization?

A Professional Employer Organization (PEO) is a business that supplies management and administrative services with regard to human resource responsibilities for employers. It serves as the co-employer of the client's employees for payroll, benefits, and related purposes. A PEO is not a Temporary Help Agency.

My employees are leased from a Professional Employer Organization, which recruits the employees and handles the hires and separations. Should I report these workers?

No, do not count these employees in employment, job openings, hires, or separations since they are co-employed by a Professional Employer Organization.

My establishment is a Professional Employer Organization. Do I report data for employees staffed at all client sites?

No, you should provide data for employment, job openings, hires, and separations only for the client indicated in Section 1 on the JOLTS data reporting form. However, if your headquarters is shown in Section 1 on the form, you should report data only for employees working at the headquarters.

are not counted in quits or employment because they are not employees of the insurance company.

	6	salespeople
+	1	supervisor
	7	total quits

The insurance company had 7 quits in October.

Reporting Layoffs and Discharges

An auto repair shop owner fired one worker on January 3rd and another on January 28th. The shop also laid off three workers on January 29th and is not expecting to recall them to work until March.

How many layoffs and discharges should the auto repair shop report for January?

Both workers who were fired are counted in layoffs and discharges because the actions took place during the month of January. The three workers who were laid off also are counted in layoffs and discharges because the action took place in January and is expected to last more than seven days. In addition, all five employees should be counted in total employment for January *if* they worked during or received pay for the pay period that included January 12th.

The auto repair shop had 5 layoffs and discharges in January.

Reporting Hires

A construction company hired 30 construction workers on April 1st for a short-term project that will be completed in June. One manager accepted an offer of employment on April 22nd but will not start work until May.

How many hires should the construction company report for April?

The 30 seasonal construction workers hired April 1st are counted as hires since they were hired and began work in April. They also are counted in total employment for April *if* they worked during the pay period that included April 12th. The one manager who accepted an offer of employment with the company during April is not counted as a hire or included in employment because he will not begin work until May.

The construction company had 30 hires in April.

Reporting Quits

Six salespeople quit work at an insurance company on the following dates: October 3rd, 9th, 10th, 23rd, 26th, and 30th, and a supervisor quit on October 20th. Two independent contractors also quit in October.

How many quits should the insurance company report for October?

All the salespeople and the supervisor who quit are counted as quits because the actions took place during October. In addition, *if* they worked during or received pay for the pay period that included October 12th, they should be included in employment for October. However, the two independent contractors

My firm is a Temporary Help Agency. Do I report data for employees staffed at client sites?

For total employment, include all employees at the site or headquarters indicated in Section 1 on the JOLTS data reporting form. Also include all employees placed from this office at all client sites if they worked during or received pay for the pay period that included the 12th of the month. Count each employee only once, even if an employee has more than one assignment during the pay period. Report job openings based on the number of people you need to hire in addition to the current employee list. When a current employee receives another assignment, do not report the employee as a hire. When an employee ends an assignment, do not report the employee as a separation, unless that particular employee is being terminated or formally separated from your agency.

I'm reporting for a school whose teachers are paid on a 10-month schedule. How do I report data for months when school is not in session (that is, July and August)?

During periods when school is out, include all faculty members who are still under contract in the total employment count, regardless of the type of pay schedule. Report job openings, hires, and separations as instructed on the JOLTS data reporting form.

If my establishment reports data to the Bureau of Labor Statistics for other surveys, am I required to report separate data for JOLTS?

JOLTS asks questions that are different from those asked in other government surveys, so we ask you to report data separately. We ask for a limited amount of data, and although participation is voluntary, we encourage you to participate.

Reporting Total Employment

A corporation has a total of 200 employees. All 180 of its factory workers are paid weekly; 40 of them are part-time and the rest are full-time employees. During the month of March, five of the factory workers were on paid vacation the entire month, and three factory workers were on leave without pay for the first three weeks of the month. All 20 supervisors are paid bi-weekly and work full time. One of the supervisors was on paid vacation the entire month of March.

How many employees should the corporation report for March?

The 180 factory workers are paid weekly, so the 7-day pay period that included March 12th is the pay period to use when counting total employment for these workers. All full-time and part-time workers are counted. The five workers on paid vacation also are counted. Although those workers did not work, they received pay for the pay period that included March 12th. The three workers who were on leave without pay are not counted because they did not work during or receive pay for the pay period that included March 12th.

The 20 supervisors are paid bi-weekly (once every two weeks), so the 14-day pay period that included March 12th is the pay period to use when counting total employment for supervisors. These employees are counted, including the supervisor on paid vacation, as specified on the JOLTS data reporting form.

177	factory workers (180-3 on leave without pay)
+ 20	supervisors
197	total

The corporation's total employment for the pay period that included March 12th was 197.

Reporting Job Openings

On the last business day of May, a law firm had three paralegal positions available, and the firm had placed an ad in the local newspaper to fill the jobs. In addition, one of the secretaries has given notice but will work until July. The firm has begun looking for a replacement secretary, but the new hire will not start until after the current secretary has left.

How many job openings should the law firm report for May?

JOLTS collects the count of job openings on the last business day of the month to get a snapshot of the need for employees at a point in time. The law firm has a total of three job openings on the last business day of May. Following the criteria for reporting job openings listed on the JOLTS data reporting form, the firm is actively recruiting for the three paralegal positions, and work could start within 30 days, so they are counted. The office is actively recruiting for the secretarial position, but even if a qualified candidate is found, he or she will not begin work until after the current secretary has left. Because work cannot begin within 30 days for the secretarial position, it is not counted in job openings.

The law firm had 3 job openings on the last business day of May.