

October 5, 2009

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Division of Management Systems
Bureau of Labor Statistics
Room 4080
2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE.
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Sent via email to Rowan.Carol@bls.gov

RE: Comments on January 2010 Displaced Worker, Employee Tenure, and Occupational Mobility Supplement (OMB Number: 1220-0104)

The Kauffman Foundation, as the nation's largest foundation devoted to furthering understanding entrepreneurship, has a strong interest in high-quality social science research relating to the conditions under which entrepreneurs are most likely to develop and succeed. We know that many people are catapulted into entrepreneurship, often self-employment, as the result of displacement. As such, we support the January 2010 Displaced Worker, Employee Tenure, and Occupational Mobility Supplement; however, we would offer a few points of comment on the existing survey.

- *SD2 Why no longer working at job:* All of the choices offered on this question with regard to why someone is no longer at a position are non-judgmental of the respondent with the exception of choice #5 which states "self-operated business failed." From other governmental research,¹ we know that "failure" and "business exit" are not the same thing. I would strongly suggest altering the wording of this question to talk about "closure."
- *Health Insurance:* There are several questions which ask about health insurance but overall coverage of the issue could be improved. In particular, SD17 states "Did (name/you) have health insurance at that job?" which could be read as "where they offered health insurance" or "did they utilize health insurance from their employer". Both questions are relevant but if the survey only has room for one, we would suggest clarification of that question.

Additionally, this is such an important topic for considering possible future job paths, we would suggest that an additional question be added which also determines the eligibility of the worker for other health insurance coverage

¹ http://www.sba.gov/advo/stats/bh_sbe03.pdf

through a spouse or domestic partner. It is critically important to understand what influences people to go into entrepreneurship and one of the biggest hypotheses is access to health insurance can be an enabling factor. Such a question in this survey would allow for the testing of this topic to determine if those with other health insurance access at the time of job displacement were more likely to go into self-employment.

Additionally, on health insurance through the displaced job, it does seem strange not to discuss COBRA which is applicable to so many displaced workers.

SD27 also looks at current health insurance coverage, asking "Other than Medicare or Medicaid, (does/do)(name/you) now have health insurance?" The topic of current coverage is important but this question fails to determine what the source of that current coverage is. In particular, is that coverage offered through a current job, COBRA, VA, through a spouse/domestic partner, a state program, or a privately purchases plan? These are simple questions for a respondent to answer and not overly burdensome while providing more context for the impact of the job displacement on the families in question.

We are very supportive of this survey but do see room for improvement in some areas of its collection. Some topics are completely left off of the survey such as utilization of different job training services while other more nuanced topics which have become much more common in the last decade such as outplacement of workers to other companies are not addressed.

Please feel free to contact us to clarify any of these comments or request additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E.J. Reedy", is displayed within a light gray rectangular box.

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