



INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S POLICY RESEARCH
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August 23, 2010

Carol Rowan
Branch of Policy Analysis
Division of Management Systems
Bureau of Labor Statistics

Dear Ms. Rowan,

We are writing in response to the request for public comment on proposed revisions to the American Time Use Survey (Federal Register DOCID: fr30jn10-105), and specifically the proposed leave module questions. We are requesting only minor changes given the late date.

We would like to thank you and the Bureau of Labor Statistics for producing the American Time Use Survey. It has provided an invaluable resource for enhancing our understanding of the time Americans devote to employment, caregiving, housework, sleep, and other activities across a broad spectrum of demographic groups. We also appreciate your efforts around the new leave model, and believe it will provide very useful information.

On specifics, the paid and unpaid leave portions of the module (Q1-Q4) are well-constructed. However, we believe the value of those items could be improved by expanding the response options in the paid access and paid usage questions (Q2 and Q4) so they reflect the tiers of paid illness leave available to some employees - sick days, temporary disability insurance, and long term disability insurance. A copy of the module, with proposed edits in track changes is attached.

The section on schedule adjustments (Q5) is more problematic. These questions presume that schedule adjustments are a substitute for paid or unpaid leave, or an employee benefit. However, a long line of research on flexible work schedules, dating back at least to the publication of Lotte Bailyn's *Breaking the Mold* (Free Press, 1993), has concluded that successful flexibility initiatives are designed to meet the needs of both employers and employees. The absence of any responses concerning the flexibility needs of employers, and employee responses to those needs, would lead to an incomplete and inherently biased understanding of the reasons for schedule adjustments.

We are therefore asking that these questions either be stricken or revised to include the completion of work tasks as a possible reason for schedule variation. Again, the proposed edits in track changes are included in the attachment. Note that the proposed changes to Q5 reduce the number of words used by interviewers to complete the module, simplify the skip patterns in the instrument, and do not add to the number of questions.

We agree that the ATUS is appropriate for exploring issues surrounding leave and flexibility, and very much look forward to exploring the findings from the module. We also hope the findings motivate the BLS to consider the inclusion of relevant questions in other, larger sample surveys. In particular, we hope to see these kinds of questions incorporated into a future revision of or supplement to the Current Population Survey so that we know more about these important labor policies and their usage.

Thank you for your consideration, and please let me know if you have any questions.

Respectfully,



Robert Drago, Research Director
Institute for Women's Policy Research

On behalf of the Paid Leave Research Group:

Heather Boushey, Center for American Progress

Naomi Gerstel, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Erin Kelly, University of Minnesota

Jodie Levin-Epstein, Center for Law and Social Policy

Vicky Lovell, California Budget Project

Kevin Miller, Institute for Women's Policy Research

Vicki Shabo, National Partnership for Women and Families

Lili Farhang, Human Impact Partners

ATUS Leave Module – BLS Proposal

Note: The leave questions only will be asked of persons who are coded as employed wage and salary workers in the ATUS. Questions LF1-LF5 is a partial list of the labor force questions currently asked in the ATUS and will not be re-asked in the module.

Items appearing in **bold** will be read aloud.

LF1. **In the LAST SEVEN DAYS, did you do ANY work for either pay or profit?"**

- If "yes", ask LF2: **"In the LAST SEVEN DAYS, did you have more than one job, including part-time, evening, or weekend work?"**
 - If "yes", ask LF3a: **"How many hours do you USUALLY work at your main job? By main job we mean the one at which you usually work the most hours."**
 - If "no", ask LF3b: **"How many hours do you USUALLY work at your job?"**
- If LF1="no", ask LF4: **"In the LAST SEVEN DAYS, did you have a job either full time or part time? Include any job from which you were temporarily absent."**
 - If "yes", ask LF5: **"What was the main reason you were absent from work during the LAST SEVEN DAYS?"**
 - On layoff
 - Slack work/business conditions
 - Waiting for a new job to begin
 - Vacation/personal days
 - Own illness/injury/medical problems
 - Childcare problems
 - Other family/personal obligation
 - Maternity/paternity leave
 - Labor dispute
 - Weather affected job
 - School/training
 - Civic/military duty
 - Does not work in the business
 - Other
 - If "yes," ask LF2: **"In the LAST SEVEN DAYS, did you have more than one job, including part-time, evening, or weekend work?"**
 - If "yes," ask LF3a: **"How many hours per week do you USUALLY work at your main job? By main job we mean the job at which you usually work the most hours."**
 - If "no," ask LF3b: **"How many hours do you USUALLY work at your job?"**

The next few questions are about paid and unpaid leave from a job. [Goto Q1.]

Leave access

Q1. (IF MULTIPLE JOB HOLDER: *Thinking about the job where you worked the most hours last week*) Do you receive paid leave on your job?

- | | | |
|--------|---|-----------|
| 1. Yes | } | Go to Q2a |
| 2. No | | |
| 3. DK | | Go to Q3 |
| 4. Ref | | |

Q2a. I'm going to read you a list of reasons why you might have to miss work. For each reason, please tell me if you are able to take paid leave in your [current/main] job.

[Read all]

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. <u>Own illness, disability, or medical care</u> | YES/NO/DK/REF |
| 2. <u>Illness or medical care of another family member</u> | YES/NO/DK/REF |
| 3. <u>Childcare, other than for illness</u> | YES/NO/DK/REF |
| 4. <u>Eldercare, other than for illness</u> | YES/NO/DK/REF |
| 5. <u>Vacation</u> | YES/NO/DK/REF |
| 6. <u>Errands or personal reasons</u> | YES/NO/DK/REF |
| 7. <u>Birth or adoption of a child</u> | YES/NO/DK/REF |

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Q2b. Does your employer offer a single type of paid leave that can be used for multiple purposes, such as sick leave, vacation, or personal leave – these plans are sometimes called consolidated leave plans or PTOs?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know

[if Q2b = 1, then goto Q2c; else goto Q2d]

Q2c. Does your employer also offer separate paid leave for... [Read all]

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. <u>Holidays</u> | Yes/No/DK/REF |
| 2. <u>Maternity or paternity leave</u> | Yes/No/DK/REF |
| 3. <u>Additional sick leave, not already included in your PTO</u> | Yes/No/DK/REF |
| 4. <u>Temporary disability</u> | Yes/No/DK/REF |
| 5. <u>Long term disability</u> | Yes/No/DK/REF |

[goto Q3]

Q2d. Employers offer different types of paid leave plans. Does [your employer/the employer where you worked the most hours last week] offer you separate paid....

[Read all]

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Sick leave (for yourself or to care for other family members) | Yes/No/DK/REF |
| 2. (Paid) Vacation or annual leave | Yes/No/DK/REF |
| 3. (Paid) Personal leave | Yes/No/DK/REF |
| 4. Paid holidays | Yes/No/DK/REF |
| 5. (Paid) Maternity or paternity leave | Yes/No/DK/REF |
| 6. (Paid) Temporary Disability leave | Yes/No/DK/REF |
| 7. (Paid) Long Term Disability leave | Yes/No/DK/REF |

[Goto Q3_Intro]

Q3_Intro. Now I'm going to ask you about unpaid leave. [Goto Q3]

Q3. [In addition to your paid leave/In your main job,] are you allowed to take time off from work without pay?

- | | | |
|--------|--------------|---|
| 1. Yes | } (goto Q3a) | |
| 2. No | | |
| 3. DK | | (if Q1=2 and Q3=2, goto Q5_intro; else if LF1 = 1, goto Q4_Intro1; else if LF4 = 1, goto Q4_Intro2) |
| 4. REF | | |

Q3a. I'm going to read a list of reasons why you might have to miss work. Assuming that you have received your employer's approval, for each reason, please tell me whether or not you are able to take time off from work without pay.

[Read all]

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Own illness, disability, or medical care | YES/NO/DK/REF |
| 2. Illness or medical care of another family member | YES/NO/DK/REF |
| 3. Childcare, other than for illness | YES/NO/DK/REF |
| 4. Eldercare, other than for illness | YES/NO/DK/REF |
| 5. Vacation | YES/NO/DK/REF |
| 6. Errands or personal reasons | YES/NO/DK/REF |
| 7. Birth or adoption of a child | YES/NO/DK/REF |
- [If there are any "Yes" responses to Q3a, goto Q3b; else if LF1 = 1, goto Q4_Intro1; else if LF4 = 1, goto Q4_Intro2]

Q3b. In your [current/main] job, have you ever taken unpaid leave for [this reason/these reasons]?

1. Yes
2. No

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3. Don't Know
4. Refused

[if there are multiple "Yes" responses to Q3a AND Q3b = 1, goto Q3c; else if LF1 = 1, goto Q4_Intro1; else if LF4 = 1, goto Q4_Intro2]

Q3c. Which ones? That is, for what reasons have you taken unpaid leave in your [current/main] job? [Highlight only those response options that were reported in Q3a; gray out remainder. Read highlighted options/Select all that apply]

- 1. Own illness, disability, or medical care**
 - 2. Illness or medical care of another family member**
 - 3. Childcare, other than for illness**
 - 4. Eldercare, other than for illness**
 - 5. Vacation**
 - 6. Errands or personal reasons**
 - 7. Birth or adoption of a child**
- [if LF1 = 1, then goto Q4_Intro1; else if LF4 = 1, then goto Q4_Intro2]

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Leave activity – Past Week

Q4_Intro1. Now I want to ask you about your work time in the past week. [goto Q4]

Q4. Did you take any paid or unpaid leave from your (main) job over the past seven days, that is from last [Fill DAY] through yesterday?

- | | |
|--------|-------------------|
| 1. Yes | (goto Q4a) |
| 2. No | } (goto Q5_intro) |
| 3. DK | |
| 4. REF | |

Q4a. In the past seven days, how many hours of leave did you take in total?

_____ hours

Allow DK/REF

[[if Q1=1, then goto Q4b; else goto Q4c]

Q4_Intro2. Earlier in the interview, you said that you did not work in the last seven days. How long have you been absent from your [current/main] job?

_____ days/weeks/months

Allow DK/REF

[if Q1=1, then goto Q4b; else goto Q4c]

Q4b. Did you use paid leave for any of the time that you took off from work in the past seven days?

1. Yes, paid for all
2. Yes, paid for some
3. No, not paid
4. DK
5. REF

[Interviewer will probe to determine which "yes" – 1 or 2, above – is applicable.]
[GOTO Q4c]

Q4c. Thinking about your longest period of leave in the last seven days, what was the main reason you had to take off from work?

[Read all]

- 1. Own illness, disability, or medical care**
- 2. Illness or medical care of another family member**
- 3. Childcare, other than for illness**
- 4. Eldercare, other than for illness**
- 5. Vacation**
- 6. Errands or personal reasons**
- 7. Birth or adoption of a child**
- 8. Other**

[If Q4c = 2, then goto Q4d;
else if (LF4=1 and Q4b=3), goto Q5_intro;
else if (LF1=1 and Q4b=3), goto Q4f;
else goto Q4e]

Q4d. Which member(s) of your family were ill?

[Select all that apply]

1. Spouse or partner
2. Child
3. Parent
4. Other relative
5. Other

[If (LF4=1 and Q4b=3), goto Q5_intro;

else if (Q4=1 and Q4b=3), goto Q4f;

else if LF1=1 and [(Q1=2 and Q3=2) or (Q1=2 and Q3=1)], goto Q4f;

else goto Q4e]

Q4e. What type(s) of leave did you use for this reason? (open-ended question, select all that apply; allow interviews to specify other leave types if reported)

1. Sick leave (for yourself or to care for other family members)
2. (Paid) Vacation or annual leave
3. (Paid) Personal leave
4. Paid holidays
5. (Paid) Maternity or paternity leave
6. PTO or consolidated leave
7. (Paid) Temporary Disability leave
8. (Paid) Long Term Disability leave
9. Unpaid leave
10. Other, specify _____

[GOTO Q4f]

Q4f. You said you were on leave for (the) [fill reason from Q4c]. In the past seven days, did you take additional leave for any other reason?

1. Yes
2. No
3. DK
4. REF

[GOTO Q4g]

Q4g. Did you take any paid or unpaid leave from your job yesterday?

1. Yes
2. No

[if Q4f=1 and Q4g=1 then goto Q4h; else goto Q5_intro]

Q4h. What was the main reason you had to take off from work yesterday?

[Read all]

1. Own illness, disability, or medical care
2. Illness or medical care of another family member
3. Childcare, other than for illness
4. Eldercare, other than for illness
5. Vacation
6. Errands or personal reasons
7. Birth or adoption of a child
8. Other

[GOTO Q5_intro]

Schedule Adjustments

Q5_Intro. Now I'm going to ask you about schedule adjustments. [goto Q5]

Q5. [If Q1 = 2 and Q3 = 2, then ask:] (in your main job), Can you vary your work schedule or location?

[Else if Q1 = 2 and Q3 = 1, then ask:] Can you vary your work schedule or location?

[Else if Q1 = 1 and Q3 = 2, then ask:] Can you vary your work schedule or location?

[Else if Q1 = 1 and Q3 = 1, then ask:] Can you vary your work schedule or location?

- 1. Yes [goto Q5a]
- 2. No
- 3. DK
- 4. REF

Q5a. How can you vary your work schedule or location? Can you change:
[Read all]

- 1. The days that you work? YES/NO/DK/REF
 - 2. The hours that you work? YES/NO/DK/REF
 - 3. The location where you work? YES/NO/DK/REF
- [if LF4 = 1, END; else goto Q5b]

Q5b. In the last seven days – that is from [DAY] through yesterday – did you change your work schedule or location for any reason?

- 1. Yes [go to Q5d.]
- 2. No/DK/REF [go to Q6]

Q5d. In what way did you change your schedule in the last seven days?

- (Highlight response options based on responses to Q5a:
if Q5a-1 = Yes, highlight options 4,5,and 6;
if Q5a-2 = Yes, highlight options 1,2, and 3;
if Q5a-3 = Yes, highlight option 7; gray out other response options.
[Read highlighted options /Select all that apply]
- 1. Worked different hours than usual, but the same total
 - 2. Worked fewer hours than usual
 - 3. Worked more hours than usual

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[Else if Q4 = 2 AND [(Q1 = 2 and Q3 = 1) OR (Q1 = 1 and Q3 = 2) OR (Q1 = 1 and Q3 = 1)], then ask:] In the last seven days – that is from [DAY] through yesterday – did you change your work schedule or location rather than using leave?¶

<#>Yes . . [if Q1 = 2 and Q3 = 2, then goto Q5d; else goto Q5c]¶

<#><sp>No¶

<#>DK . . goto Q6_Intro¶

<#>REF¶

¶

Q5c. . [if Q4 = 1 AND [(Q1 = 2 and Q3 = 1) OR (Q1 = 1 and Q3 = 2) OR (Q1 = 1 and Q3 = 1)], then ask:]

Why did you decide not to take additional leave?¶

[if Q4 = 2 AND [(Q1 = 2 and Q3 = 1) OR (Q1 = 1 and Q3 = 2) OR (Q1 = 1 and Q3 = 1)], then ask:] Why did you decide not to take leave instead?

[Read aloud/Select all that apply]¶

<#>Too much work¶

<#>Wanted to save leave¶

<#>Leave was denied¶

<#>Did not have enough leave¶

<#>Fear of job loss or other negative employment-related consequence¶

<#>Could not afford the loss in income¶

<#>Other¶

[Goto Q5d]¶

4. Worked different days than usual, but same total
 5. Worked fewer days than usual
 6. Worked more days than usual
 7. Worked at a different location than usual
 8. Other
- [GOTO Q5e]

Q5e. Why did you need to change your work schedule or location? [Bracketed
phrase conditional on whether they have leave]
[Read aloud/Select all that apply]

1. Own illness or medical care
 2. Illness or medical care of another family member
 3. To complete tasks for work
 4. Childcare, other than for illness
 5. Eldercare, other than for illness
 6. Vacation
 7. Errands or personal reasons
 8. Birth or adoption of a child
- [GOTO Q6_Intro]

Deleted: [instead of taking leave]

Non-use of leave

Q6_Intro. The next few questions are about times when you may have needed to take off from work but could not. [goto Q6]

Q6. During the past seven days, that is from last [FILL DAY] through yesterday, were there situations in which you needed to take off from work but did not?

1. Yes (goto Q6a)
2. No (END)

Q6a. Why did you need to take off work? [Read aloud/Select all that apply]

1. Own illness or medical care
2. Illness or medical care of another family member
3. Childcare, other than for illness
4. Eldercare, other than for illness
5. Vacation
6. Errands or personal reasons
7. Birth or adoption of a child
8. Other

[If Q1 = 2 and Q3 = 2, then END; else goto Q6b]

Q6b. Why did you decide not to take leave?

[Read aloud/Select all that apply]

1. Too much work
2. Wanted to save leave
3. Leave was denied
4. Did not have enough leave
5. Fear of job loss or other negative employment-related consequence
6. Could not afford the loss in income
7. Other

[END]