

Testing Alternative Reporting Periods for the Job & Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS)

PHASE 2 – Set 3 INTERVIEW GUIDE

Session Materials:

- Interview Guide
- Consent form (for reference during call)
- Blank Calendars
- Test JOLTS form

Materials will have been emailed to respondent beforehand.

RESPONDENT VERIFICATION

- Confirm that Respondent is the person we are scheduled to meet with

INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is _____ and I work for Westat, a survey research company in Rockville, Maryland. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. We know you are busy and we appreciate your time and willingness to help.

Westat is working with the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to study the Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS), an establishment survey conducted by BLS to generate statistics for job openings and turnover for key industrial sectors of the United States. The goal of JOLTS is to support BLS's reporting of unmet labor demand (in the form of rates and numbers of job openings) and turnover.

BLS is exploring changing when employers report their JOLTS data; these changes would bring JOLTS data into alignment with measures of labor supply, such as the unemployment rate.

We are talking with companies that currently fill out the JOLTS form to collect feedback about potential changes to the reporting form. Before making any changes, it's important to learn whether the instructions make sense, are easy to follow, and everyone understands them the same way. These discussions will indicate whether it's feasible to change the way BLS collects data. There are no right or wrong answers. We're interested in hearing your reactions and honest feedback.

[ASK RESPONDENT IF THEY COMPLETED THE TEST JOLTS FORM. IF NOT, RESCHEDULE ANOTHER INTERVIEW TIME]

INFORMED CONSENT

Before we get started, there are a few things I want to mention. Your participation is voluntary. If you prefer not to answer a question, just say so and we'll go on to the next one. You have the right to stop the interview at any time.

All your answers, everything you say, will be kept confidential. Neither you, nor your company will be identified in any reports.

“Your voluntary participation is requested to help BLS understand business records and their use in designing a more effective long-term approach to collecting and publishing these new data types. The purpose of this call is for internal purposes only. Information related to this study is confidential and will not be released to the public in any way that would allow identification of individuals or establishments. The BLS, its employees, agents, and partner statistical agencies, will use the information you provide for statistical purposes only and will hold the information in confidence to the full extent permitted by law. In accordance with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (Title 5 of Public Law 107-347) and other applicable Federal laws, your responses will not be disclosed in identifiable form without your informed consent.”

The interview will take about an hour. I would like to audio record our phone conversation to have as a backup for when I write up a summary of this interview. Only Westat and BLS project staff will have access to the audio-recordings and other project materials. All materials will be stored in a secure location.

[IF “OBSERVERS”: Finally, some of the researchers involved in revising the form are also listening today to learn if there are things that might need to be changed.]

TURN ON RECORDER. The date and time is _____. Now that the recorder is running:

Do you agree to participate in this interview and to our audio recording the session?

[IF YES: CONTINUE]

[IF NO: Thank and end (if No is *only* for recording purposes, continue with interview but don't record the session.)]

Thank you. I'd like to start by learning a little about this establishment and your role here.

A. RESPONDENT DETAILS

- A1. What division or department do you work in at your establishment?
- A2. What is the title of your position?
- A3. How long have you worked for [ESTABLISHMENT]?
- A4. Tell me, briefly, what you do there.
- A5. Are you the one who usually fills out the JOLTS form for your company?
- A6. When you fill out the JOLTS form, do you usually seek input/data from others in your firm (e.g. payroll, human resources or other departments)?
 - A6a. If Yes, who and why?

B. EMPLOYER INDUSTRY & PAYROLL DETAILS

B1. How often are employees paid here? (Match answer to options below)

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| ☐ Each week | ☐ Once a month |
| ☐ Every two weeks | ☐ Other |
| ☐ Twice a month | |

Please describe: _____

B1a. Given your payroll schedule, have you found it difficult in the past to complete the JOLTS form?

B1b. If Yes, why?

B2. According to BLS records, your establishment is in the [NAICS DESCRIPTION OF INDUSTRY] industry. Is this correct?

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| ☐ YES | (GO TO SECTION C. COMPLETION OF JOLTS FORM) |
| ☐ NO | (CONTINUE) |

B3. [IF NO] I'm going to read a list of industry groupings. Please tell me which one best describes your establishment's industry:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting | ☐ Information |
| ☐ Mining, Quarrying and Oil and Gas Extraction | ☐ Finance and Insurance |
| ☐ Construction | ☐ Real Estate, Rental and Leasing |
| ☐ Manufacturing | ☐ Professional and Business Services |
| ☐ Wholesale Trade | ☐ Education and Health Services |
| ☐ Retail Trade | ☐ Leisure and Hospitality |
| ☐ Transportation and Warehousing | ☐ Public Administration |
| ☐ Utilities | ☐ Other Services (except Public Administration) |

B3a. RECORD INDUSTRY HERE:

C. COMPLETION OF JOLTS TEST FORM

Respondent will have been asked to complete the test JOLTS form before the interview.

C1. We had asked that you complete the test version of the JOLTS form before today's call.

C1a: About how much time did it take to complete this form?

_____ (Minutes/Hours/Days/Weeks)

IF NOT COMPLETED, RESCHEDULE INTERVIEW.

D. DEBRIEFING

Now, I'd like to ask you some questions about completing this test version of the JOLTS form.

Calculating Pay Period Dates

We'll begin with Part 3.

D1.1. Look at the first column in Part 3 labeled Pay Period. *In your own words*, what does this instruct you to do?

D1.2. What dates did you enter? [FILLS] First Day: _____(to) Last Day: _____

D1.3. Please describe how you came up with the dates for this pay period.

D1.4. How easy or difficult was it for you to come up with these dates?

D1.4a. What made it easy/difficult?

[IF NEEDED/NOT ALREADY ANSWERED]:

D1.5. Would you need to consult with others to learn the dates that you'd need to use for the Pay Period column?

D1.5a. If YES, which staff and for what kind of information?

D1.5b. [ONLY IF NEEDED]: Are these staff inside or outside this establishment?

D1.6. What, if anything, is confusing about the Pay Period BLS is asking about in Part 3?

D1.7. If the instructions in the Pay Period column referred to "the FIRST and LAST *Business days*" instead of FIRST DAY and LAST DAY, would you have entered different dates?

D1.7.a Why or why not?

Column A: Total Employment

Let's look at Column A, Total Employment.

D2.1. What did you enter in the row under the Column A heading for Total Employment?
[FILL] _____

D2.2. *In your own words*, what dates are you reporting Total Employment for in Column A?

D2.3. Please describe how you came up with the number to report Total Employment.

D2.4. How soon after the end of that pay period (or for example your Last Day) would you be able report the number for Total Employment? **[FIND OUT IF THEIR PROCESS OR SYSTEM DOES OR DOESN'T ALLOW THEM QUICK ACCESS]**

Column B: Job Openings

Let's look at Column B: Job Openings.

D3.1. What did you enter in the row under the Column B heading for Job Openings?
[FILL] _____

D3.2. *In your own words*, what date are you to report Job Openings for in Column B?

D3.3. Please describe how you came up with the number of Job Openings to enter.

D3.3a. Did you report the number of job openings for the whole pay period or for the last day of the pay period? How did you decide to do that? **[PROBE ON WHETHER THEY CAN SELECT 1 DAY OF DATA OR IF THEY HAVE TO REPORT ON A PERIOD OR SERIES OF DATES]**

D3.4. How easy or difficult was it to come up with that number?

[IF NEEDED/NOT ALREADY ANSWERED]:

D3.5. What sources of information or what type of records would you need to refer to within this establishment in order to report the number of Job Openings for this pay period?

D3.6. Would you need to consult with anyone else to get the information you need to answer for this pay period?

D3.6a. If YES, who, and for what kinds of information?

[ONLY IF NEEDED]: (e.g., staff at other locations, headquarters staff, or other sources outside of your company)

D3.7. Thinking about the sources you used, how soon after the end of the pay period (or for example your Last Day) would you be able to report the number of Job Openings? **[FIND OUT IF THEIR PROCESS OR SYSTEM DOES OR DOESN'T ALLOW THEM QUICK ACCESS]**

D3.8. Would the process to report Job Openings for this pay period be the same or different than what you do now to report your JOLTS data? (Current: On the last business day of the month)

D3.8a. Why and how would it be [the same/different]?

D3.9. Think about reporting the number of Job Openings using the specified pay period. Is reporting for this pay period easier, about the same, or more difficult than what you do now to report JOLTS data (Current: On the last business day of the month)?

D3.10. What makes it (easier, the same, or more difficult)?

D3.11. What, if anything, in Part 3 did you find confusing?

[ONLY IF NEEDED]

D3.12. Is the instruction for identifying the time period that you are to use while completing Part 3 easy or difficult to follow?

D3.12a. What made it easy/difficult?

Calculating Reporting Period Start and End Dates for Hires & Separations

Now, let's take a look at Part 4.

D4.1 *In your own words*, what are you asked to do in the Reporting Period column?

D4.2a. What did you enter as the END Date for the Reporting Period? [FILL]_____

D4.2b. What did you enter as the START Date for the Reporting Period? [FILL]_____

D4.3. Please describe how you came up with the END dates for this reporting period.

D4.3a. Please talk me through how you determined the START Date for this reporting period. **[PROBE TO DETERMINE IF RESPONDENT ATTENDED TO AND UNDERSTOOD TO USE THE "NEXT" PAY PERIOD]**

D4.4. How easy or difficult was it for you to come up with these Start and End Dates?

D4.4a. What made it easy/difficult?

D4.5. Did you notice or use the arrow going from Part 3 to Part 4?
If so, was it helpful or not?

D4.6. Would you need to consult with others to identify these Start and End Dates?

D4.6a. If YES, which staff and for what kind of information?

D4.6b. [ONLY IF NEEDED]: Staff in or outside this establishment?

D4.7. What, if anything, is confusing about figuring out the reporting period?

D4.8. *In your own words*, how would you describe what a reporting period is?

D4.9. If the instructions for the END DATE referred to "the last *business day*" instead of the "last day", would you have entered a different date? Why or why not?

D4.10. Did you notice the document that was emailed to you with examples on how to determine reporting periods? If so, did you use it? Was it helpful? Why or why not?

Column C: Hires

Now let's talk about how you completed Column C: Hires.

D5.1. What did you enter in Column C for Hires? [FILL] _____

D5.2. *In your own words*, what reporting period are you to report Hires for in Column C?

D5.3. Please describe how you came up with the number of Hires to enter into Column C.

D5.4. How easy or difficult was it to report that number for this reporting period?

[IF NEEDED/NOT ALREADY ANSWERED]:

D5.5. What sources of information would you need to refer to within this establishment in order to report the number of Hires in Column C for this reporting period?

D5.6. Would you need to consult with anyone else to get the information you need to answer for this reporting period?

D5.6a. If YES, who, and for what kinds of information?

[ONLY IF NEEDED]: (e.g., staff at other locations, headquarters staff, or other sources outside of your company)

D5.7. You said your End Date is _____. Thinking about the sources you used, how soon after your End Date (or for example your Last Day) would you be able to report the number of Hires?

[FIND OUT IF THEIR PROCESS OR SYSTEM DOES OR DOESN'T ALLOW THEM QUICK ACCESS]

D5.8. Would the process to report Hires for your establishment for this reporting period be the same or different than what you do now to report your JOLTS data? (Current: For the Entire Month)

D5.8a. Why and how would it be [the same/different]?

Reporting Separations (Columns D-G)

D6.1. Do you *usually* report Separations as a total (one number) on the JOLTS form, or do you report these as separate numbers in Columns D, E and F?

D6.1.a. What did you do on this form?

☐ REPORTED AS TOTAL NUMBER **ONLY** IN COLUMN G [GO TO D6.2]

☐ REPORTED AS SEPARATE NUMBERS IN COLUMNS D-F [GO TO D7.1]

[IF RESPONDENT REPORTED **ONLY** A TOTAL SEPARATIONS NUMBER IN COLUMN G RATHER THAN AS SEPARATE NUMBERS FOR COLUMNS D, E AND F, ASK D6.2 – D6.11a:]

D6.2. What did you enter for Total Separations in Column G? [FILL]_____

D6.3. In *your own words*, for what time period are you to report the number of Total Separations?

D6.4. Please describe how you came up with the number of Total Separations?

D6.5. How easy or difficult was it to come up with that number for this reporting period?

[IF NEEDED/NOT ALREADY ANSWERED]:

D6.6. What sources of information would you need to refer to within this establishment in order to report the number of Total Separations for this reporting period?

D6.7. Would you need to consult with anyone else (e.g., staff at other locations, headquarters staff, or other sources outside of your company) to get the information you need to provide Total Separations for this reporting period?

D6.7.a. If YES, who, and for what kinds of information?

D6.8. You said your End Date is _____. Thinking about the sources you used, how soon after your End Date would you be able to report the number of Total Separations? **[FIND OUT IF THEIR PROCESS OR SYSTEM DOES OR DOESN'T ALLOW THEM QUICK ACCESS]**

D6.9. Would the process to report Total Separations for your establishment for this reporting period be the same or different than what you do now to report your JOLTS data? (Current: For the Entire Month)

D6.9a. Why and how would it be [the same/different]?

D6.10. What, if anything, in Part 4 of the JOLTS form did you find confusing?

D6.11. [ONLY IF NEEDED]: Are the instructions to identify the reporting period that you are to use while completing Part 4 easy or difficult to follow?

D6.11a. What made it easy / difficult?

[GO TO SECTION E. (last page COMPARISON TO CURRENT JOLTS REPORTING PROCESS)]

[ASK D7.1 – D10.6a IF RESPONDENT REPORTED SEPARATIONS AS SEPARATE NUMBERS IN EACH OF COLUMNS D-F]

Column D: Quits

Now let's look at Column D: Quits.

D7.1. What did you enter in Column D for Quits? [FILL] _____

D7.2. *In your own words*, for what time period are you to report the number of Quits?

D7.3. Please describe how you came up with the number of Quits.

D7.4. How easy or difficult was it to come up with that number for this reporting period?

[IF NEEDED/NOT ALREADY ANSWERED]:

D7.5. What sources of information would you need to refer to within this establishment in order to report the number of Quits for this reporting period?

D7.6. Would you need to consult with anyone else (e.g., staff at other locations, headquarters staff, or other sources outside of your company) to get the information you need to provide Quits for this reporting period?

D7.6a. If YES, who, and for what kinds of information?

D7.7. You said your End Date is _____. Thinking about the sources you used, how soon after your End Date would you be able to report the number of Quits? **[FIND OUT IF THEIR PROCESS OR SYSTEM DOES OR DOESN'T ALLOW THEM QUICK ACCESS]**

D7.8. Would the process to report Quits for your establishment for this reporting period be the same or different than what you do now to report your JOLTS data? (Current: For the Entire Month)

D7.8.a. Why and how would it be [the same/different]?

Column E: Layoffs & Discharges

Now let's look at Column E: Layoffs and Discharges.

D8.1. What did you enter in Column E for Layoffs and Discharges?
[FILL] _____

D8.2. *In your own words*, for what time period are you to report the number of Layoffs and Discharges?

D8.3. Please describe how you came up with the number of Layoffs and Discharges.

D8.4. How easy or difficult was it to come up with that number for this reporting period?

D8.5. Would the process to report Layoffs and Discharges for your establishment for this reporting period be the same or different than what you do now to report your JOLTS data? (Current: For the Entire Month)

D8.5a. Why and how would it be [the same/different]?

Column F: Other Separations

Now let's talk about how you completed Column F: Other Separations.

D9.1. What did you enter in Column F for Other Separations?

[FILL] _____

D9.2. *In your own words*, for what time period are you to report the number of Other Separations?

D9.3. Please describe how you came up with the number of Other Separations.

D9.4. How easy or difficult was it to come up with that number for this reporting period?

D9.5. Would the process to report Other Separations for your establishment for this reporting period be the same or different than what you do now do to report your JOLTS data? (Current: For the Entire Month)

D9.5a. Why and how would it be [the same/different]?

Column G: Total Separations (NEW)

Finally, let's talk about how you completed Column G: Total Separations. This is a new column that was added to this version of the JOLTS form.

D10.1. What did you enter in Column G for Total Separations? [FILL] _____

D10.2. *In your own words*, for what time period are you to report the number of Total Separations?

D10.3. Please describe how you came up with the number of Total Separations.

D10.3.a. [If $D+E+F \neq G$]. Your number of Total Separations is higher/lower than the number of quits, layoffs, discharges and other separations. Can you explain why it would be higher/lower?

D10.4. What, if anything, in Part 4 of the JOLTS form did you find confusing?

D10.5. [ONLY IF NEEDED]: Is the instruction for identifying the reporting period that you are to use while completing Part 4 easy or difficult to follow?

D10.5a. What made it easy / difficult?

E. COMPARISON TO CURRENT JOLTS REPORTING PROCESS

Think about how you were asked to report the numbers of Hires and Separations in Columns C through G using the reporting period.

E1. Overall, would reporting Hires and Separations for this new reporting period be *easier, about the same, or more difficult* than what you do now to report JOLTS? (Current: For the Entire Month)

- ☐ EASIER
- ☐ ABOUT THE SAME
- ☐ MORE DIFFICULT

E2. What makes it (easier/the same/more difficult)?

IF MORE DIFFICULT: Would it be difficult after you understood and were more familiar with the new reporting period? In other words, would the actual reporting process be more difficult?

E3. Overall, thinking about both of the revised time periods (on the LAST DAY of the Pay Period for Job Openings and using the Reporting Period for Hires/Separations), would reporting take *less time, about the same amount of time, or longer* than what you do now for JOLTS?

- ☐ LESS TIME
- ☐ ABOUT THE SAME AMOUNT OF TIME
- ☐ LONGER

***E4. Would reporting for these new time periods change your establishment's ability to submit the JOLTS data?

[***PROBE TO DETERMINE IF RESPONDENT COULD STILL REPORT FOR JOLTS IF THE NEW TIME PERIODS WERE USED]

E4a. Please explain.

F. WRAP UP AND CLOSING

Those are all of the questions that I have for you today.

F1. Is there anything that we have not *already* discussed that you would like BLS know about using the alternative time periods to complete the JOLTS?

Thank you for your time in this research study.

On behalf of BLS, thank you in advance for your upcoming response to the JOLTS survey. The new reporting periods we just talked about are just for this research study, please use the normal reporting period for your future JOLTS responses.