



STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-30



U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

Introduction

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) was established in 1884 to “collect information upon the subject of labor, its relation to capital, the hours of labor and earnings of laboring men and women, and the means of promoting their material, social, intellectual and moral prosperity.” The first BLS Commissioner, Carroll Wright, described the work of the agency as “conducting judicious investigations and the fearless publication of facts.” That mission continues today.

MISSION STATEMENT: The Bureau of Labor Statistics produces objective, quality measures and analyses of labor market activity, working conditions, price changes, and productivity in the U.S. economy to support public and private decision making.

We adhere to a set of **VALUES and PRINCIPLES** that guide us in fulfilling our mission, including:

- Executing our mission with independence from partisan interests
- Striving to meet the needs of a varied set of customers for accurate, objective, relevant, timely, and accessible information
- Protecting the trust of data providers by ensuring the confidentiality and exclusive statistical use of responses
- Employing innovative methods to keep pace with the rapidly changing economy
- Supporting our staff and being good stewards of the taxpayers’ money

VISION STATEMENT: To be the gold-standard source of data and analyses by enhancing public trust and continuously improving our relevancy, timeliness, accuracy, and efficiency through innovation.

Who we are

BLS achieves its mission through the dedicated work of almost 2,000 federal employees working at headquarters in the national capital region, in six regional offices, and in localities across the country. This staff is comprised of economists, statisticians, data scientists, information technology specialists, researchers, administrative specialists, and many other professionals. To assist us in achieving our mission, we maintain partnerships with state and territorial governments, coordinate with other federal statistical agencies, and contract with private vendors for data collection, information technology, and related services.

As an agency of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), BLS provides statistical guidance to the department and its agencies and works in partnership with those agencies to support their data needs. The Commissioner of Labor Statistics is the Statistical Official of the Department of Labor. BLS is one of several agencies in the decentralized U.S. statistical system, all of which adhere to a series of laws, regulations, and guidelines to ensure consistent statistical policy. We adhere to the following Fundamental Responsibilities:

- Produce and disseminate relevant and timely statistical information
- Conduct credible and accurate statistical activities
- Conduct objective statistical activities

- Protect the trust of information providers by ensuring the confidentiality and exclusive statistical use of their responses

What we do

As stated in our mission statement, BLS produces objective, quality measures and analyses of labor market activities, working conditions, price changes, and productivity in the U.S. economy. We do this through the operation of about 20 statistical programs. These programs operate in a variety of ways: some provide a monthly “first-look” at economic activity, some track activity over time, some take an in-depth look at specific aspects of the economy, and some offer detailed information available for further research. While each statistical program is unique, nearly all follow these general steps: planning, testing, sample selection, data collection, review, estimation, and dissemination. BLS has staff who are experts in each of these areas.

BLS data influence many aspects of Americans’ lives. For example, the Consumer Price Index is used to adjust Social Security payments and federal income tax brackets while the Employment Cost Index is one of several BLS sources used to adjust Medicare reimbursements. Several national data series, including employment, unemployment, and productivity, are used by policymakers to track the state of the economy and to drive changes in economic policy. State and local employment and unemployment data are inputs to formulas used to distribute job training funds and other resources. Trends on worker pay, health insurance, and retirement benefits have influenced legislation while workplace injury data have led to new safety regulations.

A large amount of BLS data is the result of surveys that are voluntary. We extend our appreciation to the businesses and households who are called upon to provide information. Without their voluntary cooperation, we would be unable to provide quality data. BLS also takes advantage of the rapid expansion of electronic data sources, both to supplement and to replace our traditional collection methods. We are also looking at how the world is changing, and how our statistics must change to keep pace. This includes new forms of work, new goods and services, new forms of compensation, new tools such as artificial intelligence, and more.

From its roots more than a century ago, BLS focused on getting information to customers quickly, in an understandable way, and with sufficient technical detail to help users understand the data and its limitations. Today, these goals are achieved by announcing release dates in advance, providing information in many formats (including video, interactive graphics, and social media posts), and maintaining a robust catalog that details our methods.

Finally, BLS staff participate in a variety of organizations and activities that allow us to share our expertise, build relationships, and learn from colleagues. We provide seminars and training opportunities for our staff and colleagues in other agencies, and we participate in professional associations, cross-government groups, and international groups. BLS seeks input from many stakeholders and is regularly seeking input from businesses, individuals, and other organizations.

Management of the Plan

This plan was developed by BLS senior staff in 2025.

The BLS executive staff is responsible for the oversight of this Strategic Plan. Progress on the strategic goals, objectives, and strategies identified in the plan is monitored on a continuous basis. This monitoring includes performance measures, such as the timeliness and accuracy of data releases, as well as progress toward completion of specific objectives. We are confident that the goals and strategies identified in this plan will put BLS on a path for continued success over the coming years. Nonetheless, a challenge in planning over several years is the uncertainty over future budgets and future priorities of the administration and Congress. We have built this plan on the basis of current information. As priorities change, we will make needed adjustments.

Our Strategic Goals and Objectives

Strategic Goal 1 (Produce and advance quality economic measures):

Produce objective data and analyses that are timely, accurate, relevant, and advance the measurement of the U.S. economy

This Strategic Goal recognizes that the core mission of BLS is to continue to produce quality economic measures and analyses and to constantly strive to improve those measures. This strategic goal encompasses ongoing production as well as efforts to improve the data we produce. By engaging in research to advance economic theory and statistical techniques related to measurement, BLS will improve the accuracy, timeliness, and relevance of existing measures and will expand coverage to enhance the usefulness of our data to our customers. Fulfilling this strategic goal requires not only the dedicated work of staff directly involved in each of these programs, but also the quality work of expert staff who perform important functions in the areas of administration, information technology, data collection and other field operations, statistical methods, publications, and data dissemination. This Strategic Goal focuses on production and continuous improvement.

Objective 1.1 Efficiently produce and improve objective, quality, and accurate data

- Strategy 1.1.1 – Routinely produce objective and timely statistics and analysis
- Strategy 1.1.2 – Continuously improve and innovate production processes
- Strategy 1.1.3 – Improve data quality and timeliness by applying advances in economic theory and statistical techniques

Objective 1.2 Ensure relevance in describing the dynamic U.S. economy and respond to evolving needs

- Strategy 1.2.1 – Engage in research to understand the changing economy
- Strategy 1.2.2 – Refine BLS measures to capture the dynamic U.S. economy
- Strategy 1.2.3 – Develop new data, expand coverage, and test experimental data series

Strategic Goal 2 (Enhance collection methods and investigate new data sources):

Enhance collection methods and investigate new data sources to balance statistical quality, agency resources, and respondent burden

BLS will continue to improve its data collection methods while advancing innovative processes and methods to improve data quality and provide increased flexibility to data providers while limiting burden and protecting

confidentiality. Further, BLS will investigate new sources of data as complements to and potential substitutes for our directly collected data. This Strategic Goal focuses on our source data and collection methods.

Objective 2.1 Support and improve data collection processes and systems

- Strategy 2.1.1 – Improve and modernize reliable data collection processes and IT systems to promote the efficient use of resources and to provide respondents with effective reporting solutions
- Strategy 2.1.2 – Increase collaboration and information sharing in data collection across BLS programs and with other governmental organizations
- Strategy 2.1.3 - Protect the confidentiality of data providers

Objective 2.2 Explore innovations and efficiencies in survey methods and source data

- Strategy 2.2.1 – Explore innovative sampling design and estimation alternatives to allow targeted data collection that increases data quality while reducing costs and respondent burden
- Strategy 2.2.2 –Conduct research on ways to reduce respondent burden and motivate voluntary participation
- Strategy 2.2.3 – Identify and evaluate new data sources and explore and implement methods to incorporate these data into BLS programs and survey processes
- Strategy 2.2.4 – Facilitate the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to streamline data collection and analysis and reduce respondent burden

Strategic Goal 3 (Uphold organizational excellence):

Uphold and improve our standing as a dynamic, world-class statistical agency through visionary leadership, responsible resource stewardship, and dedicated expert staff

The activities identified throughout this plan can only be accomplished through strong leadership and the dedicated work of BLS staff, our greatest asset. We strive to be good stewards of all our resources – staff, budget, and information technology – and foster future leaders who will continue these efforts. This Strategic Goal focuses on our staff and other resources.

Objective 3.1 Recruit, train, and engage a talented workforce

- Strategy 3.1.1 – Create a culture of continuous learning and achievement by advocating for professional staff development and growth and rewarding staff for innovation, knowledge, and excellence
- Strategy 3.1.2 – Maintain a strong staff retention and succession plan by developing current, new, and aspiring leaders, providing them with opportunities to serve and gain experience in leadership roles, and establishing a robust strategy for knowledge transfer
- Strategy 3.1.3 – Continue to engage and expand outreach to fill future workforce skill needs

Objective 3.2 Optimize the use of financial, IT, and infrastructure resources

- Strategy 3.2.1 – Preserve transparency and accountability in the execution of budgeted resources
- Strategy 3.2.2 – Champion innovation by investing strategically in the future state of the organization

- Strategy 3.2.3 – Modernize and improve BLS IT processes, infrastructure, and applications to support efficiency, next generation data collection, analytics, and public dissemination
- Strategy 3.2.4 – Continue to support state-of-the-art workspace functionality at headquarters, regional office, and other locations

Objective 3.3 Strengthen BLS program performance

- Strategy 3.3.1 – Continue agency-wide quarterly and program reviews, tracking of performance measures, and enhancing documentation of internal BLS practices to continuously improve operations
- Strategy 3.3.2 – Ensure continuous risk management is embedded across all mission-critical activities and operations, including BLS performance management, to identify, mitigate, and manage threats and vulnerabilities
- Strategy 3.3.3 – Keep abreast of, and prepare to participate in, future government reform activities

Strategic Goal 4 (Enhance public trust and customer experience):

Bolster trust and ensure equitable access by providing information in ways that are transparent and easy for a broad customer base to access, understand, and use

BLS information must be readily available for a broad range of data users to inform their decisions. As methods of sharing information expand in the digital age, BLS must continue to expand the ways that we provide data. By engaging with our stakeholders and leading economic, statistical, and professional communities, BLS will gain a better understanding of customer needs to inform our priorities. This Strategic Goal focuses on our customers.

Objective 4.1 Foster greater public trust through improved transparency and clarity of methods

- Strategy 4.1.1 – Ensure transparency by maintaining and improving clear, up-to-date documentation on BLS methods
- Strategy 4.1.2 – Continue to ensure equal access to BLS data
- Strategy 4.1.3 – Provide explanatory material to help the public understand and use BLS measures and concepts effectively, including information on reliability and revisions

Objective 4.2 Continue to improve customer experience on the BLS website

- Strategy 4.2.1 – Ensure website content stays current and follows plain language and modern web design principles
- Strategy 4.2.2 – Continually monitor best practices in website design to improve functionality, accessibility, navigation, search, and available tools
- Strategy 4.2.3 – Continually monitor the BLS feedback system for actionable feedback to improve the data user experience

Objective 4.3 Evaluate and use new methods and platforms to deliver BLS content to our customers

- Strategy 4.3.1 – Broaden transmittal of BLS content through current platforms and by identifying and evaluating new and emerging dissemination platforms, implementing them as feasible

- Strategy 4.3.2 – Review and update formats of news releases, other data reports, Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), microdata, metadata, and other outputs to better meet online user needs

Objective 4.4 Broaden communication and outreach efforts to promote the BLS brand to data users and survey respondents

- Strategy 4.4.1 – Develop and implement focused outreach to (1) educate potential customers on the confidentiality, security, data quality, availability and use of BLS data products, and (2) promote the value of survey participation to current and potential respondents
- Strategy 4.4.2 – Continue to conduct and expand data user outreach including conferences
- Strategy 4.4.3 – Develop and expand partnerships with key stakeholders to build supporters and advocates for BLS, including State Labor Market Information offices, state and local economic development entities, schools of journalism, and national and international statistical organizations