



# **Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey**

## **Highlights**

**October 2015**

Bureau of Labor Statistics

December 8, 2015

**Chart 1. Number of unemployed persons per job opening  
Seasonally adjusted**

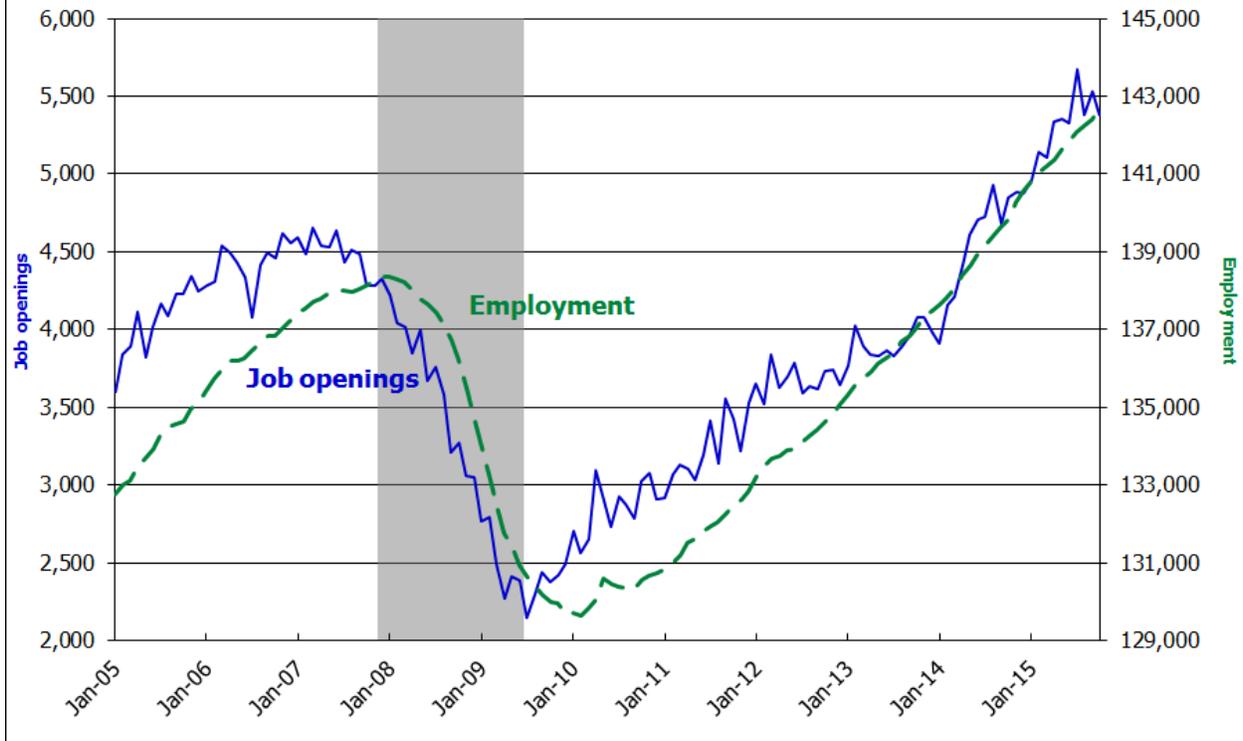


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey and Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, December 8, 2015.

Note: Shaded area represents recession as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER).

- The ratio between the unemployment level and job openings level changes over time.
- When the most recent recession began (December 2007), the number of unemployed persons per job opening was 1.8. The ratio peaked at 6.8 unemployed persons per job opening in July 2009 and has trended downward since.
- The ratio of unemployed persons to job openings was 1.5 in October 2015.

**Chart 2. Job openings and employment**  
**Seasonally adjusted, in thousands**

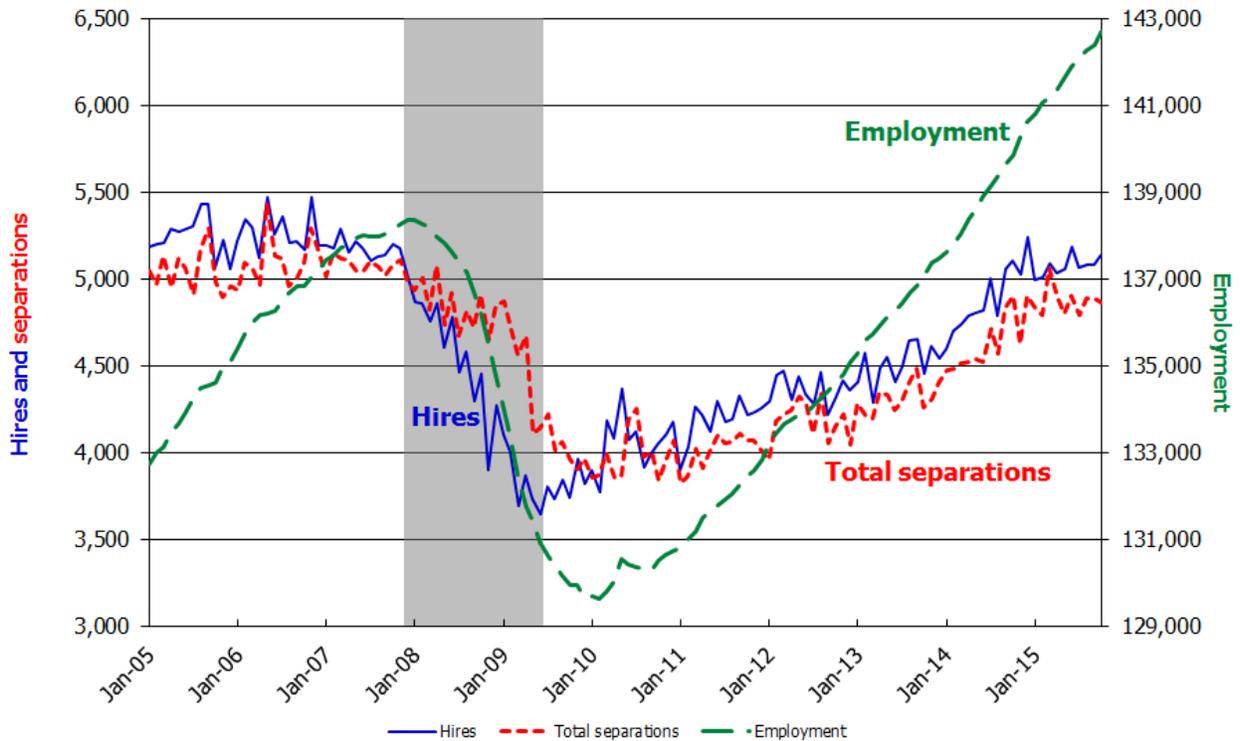


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics and Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, December 8, 2015.

Note: Shaded area represents recession as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER).

- The number of job openings declined to a series low in July 2009, one month after the official end of the most recent recession. Employment continued to decline after the end of the recession, reaching a low point in February 2010.
- Job openings have trended upward since their series low in July 2009, and have surpassed the prerecession peak (March 2007). In October 2015, there were 5.4 million job openings.

**Chart 3. Hires, total separations, and employment**  
**Seasonally adjusted, in thousands**

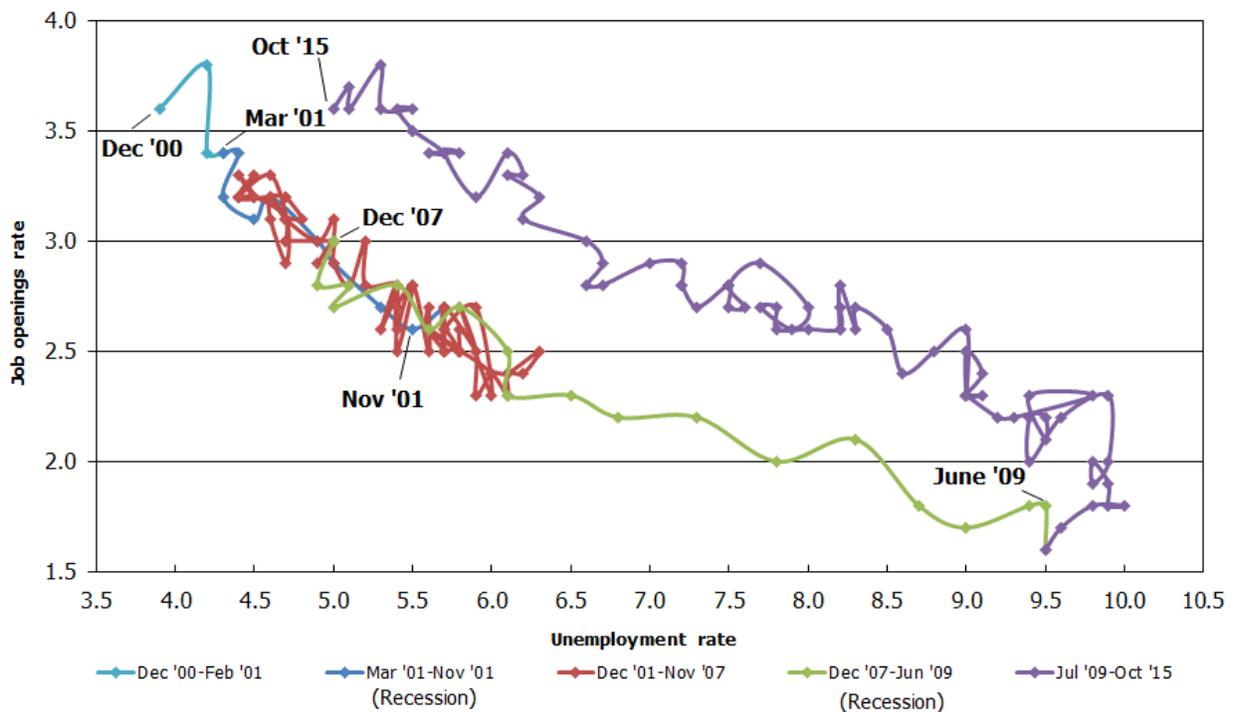


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics and Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, December 8, 2015.

Note: Shaded area represents recession as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER).

- There were 5.1 million hires in October, which is slightly below prerecession levels.
- Total separations remain below prerecession levels, at 4.9 million in October.

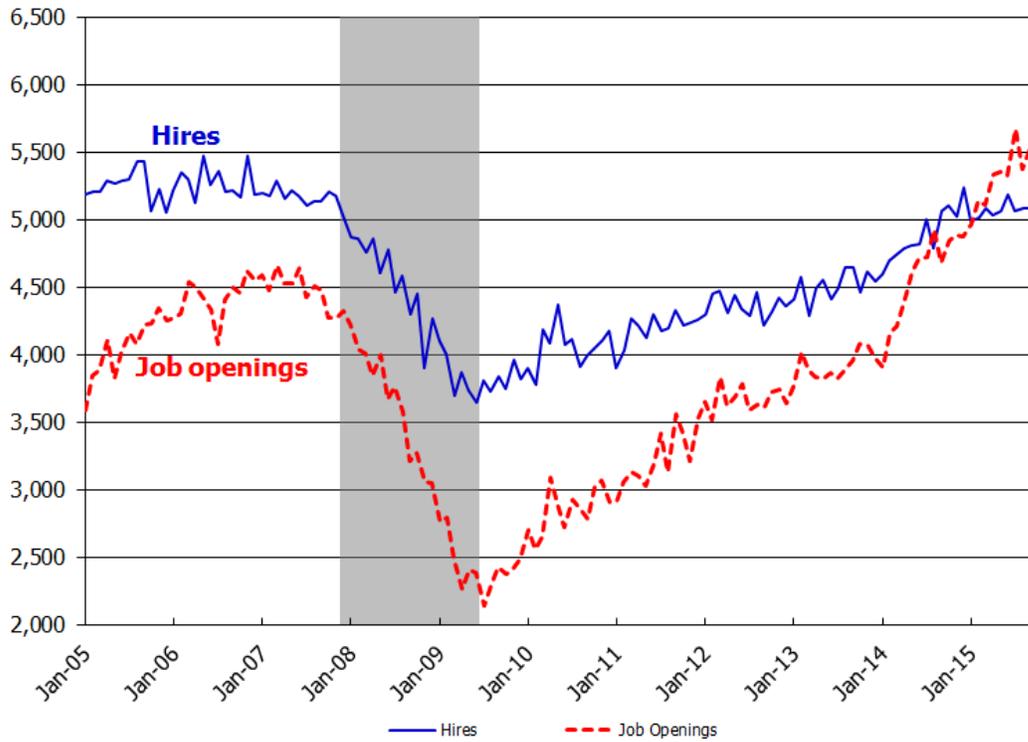
**Chart 4. The Beveridge Curve (job openings vs. unemployment rate)  
Seasonally adjusted**



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey and Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, December 8, 2015.

- This graph plots the job openings rate against the unemployment rate. This graphical representation is known as the Beveridge Curve, named after the British economist William Henry Beveridge (1879–1963). The economy's position on the downward sloping Beveridge Curve reflects the state of the business cycle.
- During an expansion, the unemployment rate is low and the job openings rate is high. Conversely, during a contraction, the unemployment rate is high and the job openings rate is low. The position of the curve is determined by the efficiency of the labor market. For example, a greater mismatch between available jobs and the unemployed in terms of skills or location would cause the curve to shift outward (up and toward the right).
- From the start of the most recent recession in December 2007 through the end of 2009, each month's point on the curve moved lower and further to the right as the job openings rate declined and the unemployment rate rose. From 2010 to the present, each month's point moved up and to the left as the job openings rate increased and the unemployment rate decreased.
- In October 2015, the unemployment rate was 5.0 percent and the job openings rate was 3.6 percent, which is higher than the job openings rate before the most recent recession for the same unemployment rate.

**Chart 5. Total nonfarm hires and job openings**  
**Seasonally adjusted, in thousands**

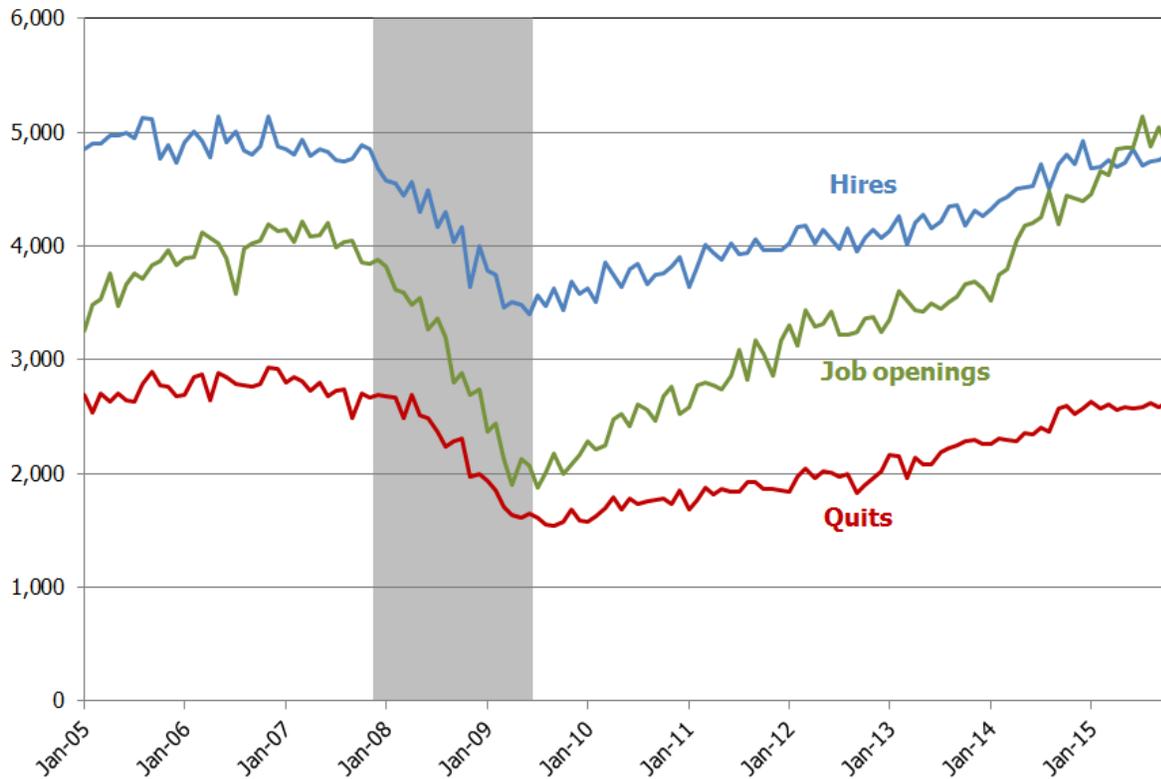


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, December 8, 2015.

Note: Shaded area represents recession as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER).

- The number of hires has exceeded the number of job openings for most of the JOLTS history. Over the past year, this relationship has changed as job openings have outnumbered hires for several months.
- Hires exceeded job openings for over thirteen years, between December 2000 and July 2014. Job openings exceeded hires for the first time in August 2014, although hires then outnumbered job openings for the next five months. Since February 2015, however, this new relationship has persisted with job openings exceeding hires for nine consecutive months.
- At the end of the most recent recession in June 2009, there were 1.3 million more hires throughout the month than there were job openings on the last business day of the month.
- In October 2015, there were 246,000 fewer hires throughout the month than there were job openings on the last business day of the month.

**Chart 6. Total private job openings, hires, and quits**  
**Seasonally adjusted, in thousands**

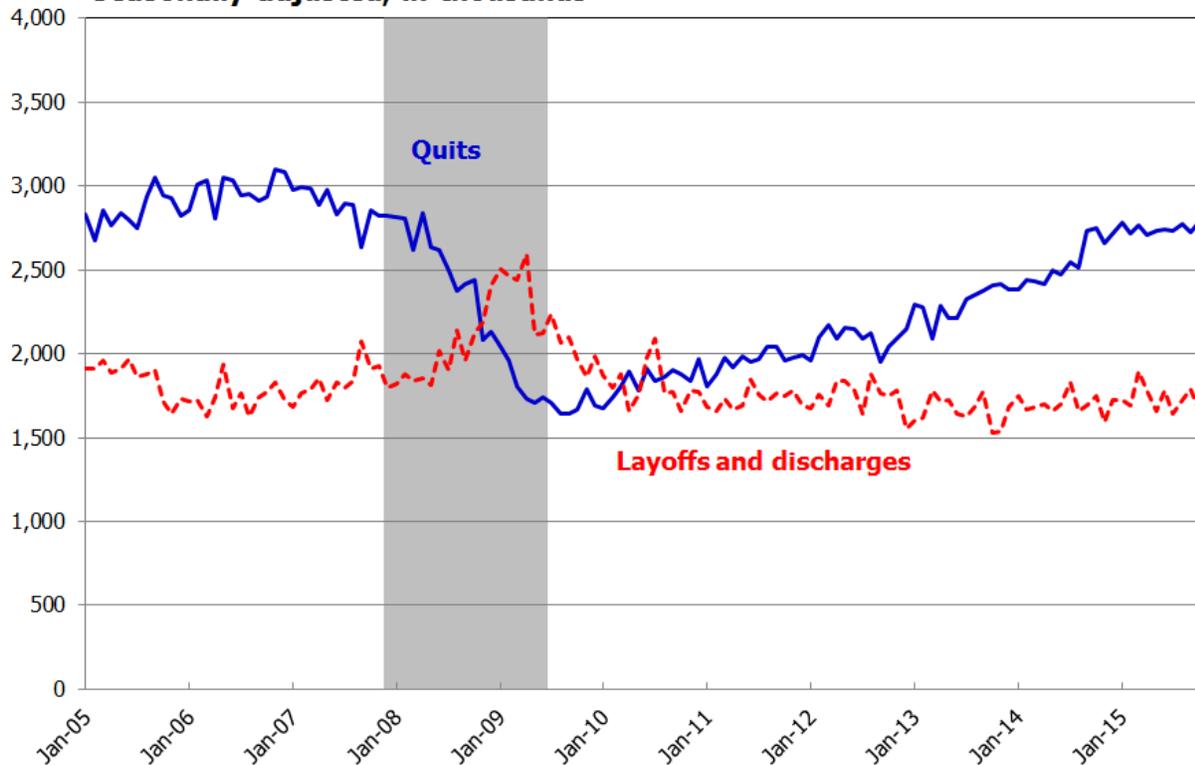


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, December 8, 2015.

Note: Shaded area represents recession as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER).

- Following the end of the most recent recession, the number of job openings, hires, and quits have increased at different rates.
- Total private job openings have increased since their low in July 2009, returning to their prerecession level in April 2014. There were 4.9 million open jobs in the private sector on the last business day in October 2015.
- Hires in the private sector have increased since their low in June 2009. At 4.8 million in October, hires are now 1.3 percent below their prerecession level in November 2007.
- Quits in the private sector have increased since their low in September 2009, reaching 2.6 million in October 2015. The number of quits is now 2.0 percent below their prerecession level.

**Chart 7. Quits and layoffs and discharges**  
**Seasonally adjusted, in thousands**



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, December 8, 2015.

Note: Shaded area represents recession as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER).

- Quits are generally voluntary separations initiated by employees. Therefore, the quits rate can serve as a measure of workers' willingness or ability to leave jobs.
- The number of quits has exceeded the number of layoffs and discharges for most of the JOLTS history. During the latest recession, this relationship changed as layoffs and discharges outnumbered quits from November 2008 through March 2010.
- In October 2015, there were 2.8 million quits.
- There were 1.7 million layoffs and discharges in October 2015.