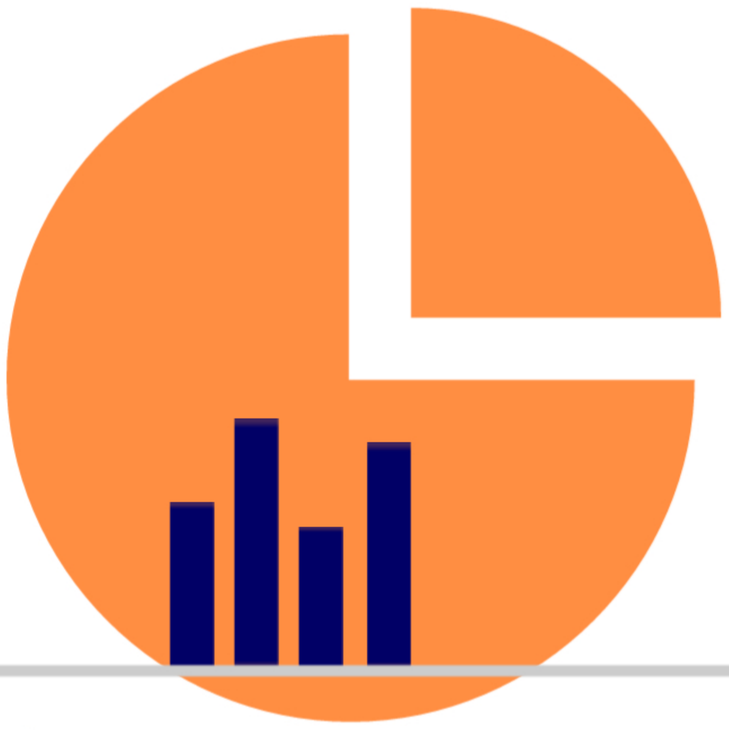
How BLS Collects and Publishes Statistics



BLS conducts surveys of both businesses and households.

→ Surveys are designed by groups of economists, statisticians, computer experts, and others.

1

First, BLS develops survey questions that obtain accurate and useful information from households and businesses.

Then, statisticians at BLS develop a survey sample.

→ A sample is a smaller portion of a population that is intended to represent the full population

2

Interviewers contact households or businesses and ask them to participate in a survey.

Q: Why is participation important?

A: By participating in a survey, you help to make sure people like you are represented in the statistics that are published. Without the voluntary cooperation of so many individuals and businesses, BLS could not publish accurate statistics.

3

Businesses and individuals then begin reporting their statistics to BLS over the internet, by phone, personal visits, and through the mail.

→ BLS collects statistics on employment, unemployment, wages, prices, and much more.

4

BLS collects these statistics in a database and stores them for processing.

→ Economists and statisticians at BLS check the data that are reported to ensure there are no mistakes.

5

BLS combines the survey answers in a database to calculate statistics about broader groups, rather than focusing on the answers of any single household or business.

6

Economists and statisticians make sure the data make sense and analyze trends.

Economists prepare a news release that summarizes the statistics and how they have changed over time.

7

Economists check the data again! (It's really important that the numbers are right!)

→ BLS shares the statistics with the world by posting news releases and data to the website, www.bls.gov, and on Twitter, @BLS_gov.

8

The statistics are then used by businesses, jobseekers, students, teachers, policymakers, journalists, consumers, and investors to make important decisions.