

The January Review

The *Review* opens 2012 by presenting five articles showcasing the newest set of projections, which cover the 2010–2020 period. These five articles take an in-depth look at how the projections are formed and provide analysis of the results of those projections. Dixie Sommers and James C. Franklin note, in the initial article this month, the customer base for the BLS projections—which are updated every 2 years—has widened substantially. High school and college students, adult jobseekers and career changers, guidance counselors, career development specialists, and others are now routine users of the information. The *Review* serves as the principal vehicle for a detailed look at the various components of the projections, including projected changes in the labor force and in the industrial and occupational mix of employment.

In the second article, Kathryn Byun and Christopher Frey discuss the projected data on output, productivity, personal savings, and other macroeconomic variables. Byun and Frey caution that because of the severity of the 2007–2009 recession, the 2010 starting point is quite low, thus some of the projected growth represents a climb out from the deep recession.

Mitra Toossi explains in the third article that, with the aging of the baby-boom generation (those born between 1946 and 1964), the labor force is projected to grow more slowly in the 2010–2020 period. Toossi notes that by 2020 all the baby boomers will be older than age 55; this demographic shift is expected to put downward pressure on the overall

labor force participation rate and on the growth of the labor force in the future.

With the foundation for the macroeconomic and labor force projections laid, BLS develops industry employment and output projections at a detailed level. Richard Henderson points out in the fourth article that total employment in the United States is expected to increase by 20.5 million over the 2010–2020 period, rising to more than 163 million. The annual growth rate of 1.3 percent reverses the 0.2-percent annual rate of decline that occurred during the 2000–2010 period, in which 3.2 million jobs were lost. The professional and business services sector and the health care and social assistance sector account for nearly half of the projected job growth. Construction also is expected to add jobs, whereas manufacturing and agricultural employment are expected to decline, although at more moderate rates than seen historically. With regard to industry employment changes at a more detailed level, the home health care services industry is projected to have the most rapid growth in the economy, adding more than 870,000 jobs by 2020—an average annual growth rate of 6.1 percent.

In the final article, C. Brett Lockard and Michael Wolf review each of the 22 major occupational groups to present data on projected job openings from both employment growth and replacement needs. Health care, personal care, and community and social service occupations are expected to grow the fastest. Lockard and Wolf also introduce a new education and training classification system. This system helps describe what mix of education, work experience, or on-

the-job training is needed for entry into a particular occupation.

In addition to the articles found in this issue of the *Review*, the *Occupational Outlook Quarterly* has a special projections issue, “Charting the Projections,” which can be found at <http://www.bls.gov/opus/ooq/2011/winter/home.htm>.

Union membership in 2011

The union membership rate was 11.8 percent in 2011, according to data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). The rate, which is the percentage of wage and salary workers who were members of a union, was essentially unchanged from 11.9 percent in 2010.

Public-sector workers had a union membership rate (37.0 percent) more than 5 times higher than that of private-sector workers (6.9 percent). Within the public sector, local government workers had the highest union membership rate, 43.2 percent. Private-sector industries with high unionization rates included transportation and utilities (21.1 percent) and construction (14.0 percent), while low unionization rates occurred in agriculture and related industries (1.4 percent) and in financial activities (1.6 percent).

The union membership rate for men (12.4 percent) was higher than that for women (11.2 percent). Among major race and ethnicity groups, black workers were more likely to be union members (13.5 percent) than workers who were white (11.6 percent), Asian (10.1 percent), or Hispanic (9.7 percent).

For a look at the full report on union members in 2010 published by BLS, go to http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/union2_01272012.htm. □