

The National Academies of
SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE

Panel on Measuring Contingent Work and Alternative Work Arrangements

First Meeting – Friday, March 29, 2019

The Keck Center of the National Academies
Conference Room 101
500 Fifth St. NW
Washington, DC 20001

AGENDA

Meeting Goals: During the public session, BLS leadership will outline their goals for the study and their motivation for commissioning it. Presentations by BLS experts describing the history, measurement objectives, and past performance of the Contingent Worker Supplement (CWS) of the Current Population Survey (CPS) will follow. Strengths and weaknesses of household surveys, and the CPS in particular, for the purpose of measuring contingent work will be identified. Committee members will offer brief statements highlighting their interests in and work on the topic and preliminary assessments of what the key issues are for advancing measurement of alternative work generally, and improving the BLS programs specifically. Time will also be allocated for a discussion among panel members and sponsor representatives to sharpen the project statement of task and to discuss content of the meeting #2 workshop. The final portion of the meeting will take place in closed session to complete institutional requirements (specifically, the bias and conflict of interest discussion) and revisit issues raised in open session.

OPEN PUBLIC SESSION (9:00 AM – 3:00 PM)

9:00 AM Welcome, Introductions, Agenda, and the Study Charge (*breakfast inside room 101*)

– **Susan Houseman**, *Panel Chair*

9:15 Overview of the National Academies' Study Process

– **Mary Ellen O'Connell**, *Director, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education*
– **Brian Harris-Kojetin**, *Director, Committee on National Statistics*

9:45 Sponsor's Welcome: The Agency's Vision and Strategy for Measuring Employment in the Modern Economy. Goals for the Study.

– **William J. Wiatrowski**, *Bureau of Labor Statistics* (10 minutes)

Overview of the CWS, CPS

- Origins of the supplement, measurement objectives; **Anne Polivka**, *BLS* (25 minutes)
- Findings from the May 2017 CWS; **Julie Hatch Maxfield**, *BLS* (10 minutes)
- Experience with adding questions about electronically mediated employment; **Julie Hatch Maxfield**, *BLS* (10 minutes)

Reactions and Questions from the Panel; Open Discussion (20 minutes)

11:00 **COFFEE BREAK** (*refreshments available inside conference room 101*)

11:10 Challenges and Opportunities Associated with the CPS and CPS Supplements. Among the Questions to be Addressed in this Session are:

- Which data and results of the CWS have most often been used stakeholders; which have been used least?
- Are there questions that could be cut on a future supplement to make room for new ones?
- What is the cost of expanding CWS?
- Going forward, which categories of contingent work (e.g., temporary, contract, on-call, online platform) are to be prioritized?

Survey Strengths: Sample Design/Collection/Demographic Detail, etc.

–**Anne Polivka**, *BLS* (20 minutes)

Survey Constraints: Sample Universe (employed, cost to expand), Proxy (cost of self-reporting), Reference/Recall Period (same as CPS/different), etc.

–**Julie Hatch Maxfield**, *BLS* (20 minutes)

Open Discussion/Q&A (20 minutes)

12:15 PM **WORKING LUNCH** (*available inside conference room 101*)

The second meeting (June 10-11, 2019) will include presentations from experts on a broad range of topics: Conceptual issues in defining/categorizing different kinds of non-standard work; improving the CPS/CWS questionnaire to achieve stated measurement objectives; complementary survey and non-survey data resources (administrative and commercial);

and measurement objectives beyond quantifying employment and earnings (such as worker quality of life issues). In order to get a head start on this information gathering phase of the study, we will hear about the current work of two panel members over lunch:

- **Diana Farrell** will discuss work (Farrell, Greig, and Hamoudi, 2018) using data on deposits into JP Morgan Chase bank accounts (and other financial data) to measure platform employment and earnings. Findings and methods which may provide insights to BLS’s household survey data plans will be discussed.
- **Katharine Abraham** will discuss discrepancies between household survey and tax data estimates of the level of self-employment and new evidence from survey experiments that shed light on how well typical household survey questions capture various types of contract and informal work

1:30 Identification of Key Topics; Discussion of the Project Statement of Task

- **Panel members’** perspectives: each panel member will identify key issues embodied in the statement of task and discuss their primary interests related to the study. At this time, statements should be brief and geared toward shaping the scope of the study; we will hear about panel members’ relevant research in more detail during the second meeting (5 minutes each)
- Response from **sponsors**; open discussion and, if needed, amendment of panel’s charge (statement of task) in order to help set the scope of the study (15 minutes)

STATEMENT OF TASK

The Committee on National Statistics of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine will appoint an expert panel to review the Contingent Worker Supplement (CWS) of the Current Population Survey (CPS) for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) in the U.S. Department of Labor. The CWS provides key measures of contingent workers, alternative work arrangements, and insights on the “gig” economy; however, there are disagreements among stakeholders on definitions and measures of these concepts. The expert panel will carefully review the CWS and other existing measures as well as the methodological issues surrounding measurement of these concepts. As part of its information-gathering activities, the panel will conduct a workshop to discuss the views of data users, stakeholders and survey experts. The panel will produce a consensus report, which will include a rapporteur-authored proceedings of the workshop along with conclusions and recommendations for BLS on the CWS.

2:45 Open Discussion: Content of Meeting #2 Workshop; Prioritization of Information Gathering Tasks

3:00 PM **PLANNED ADJOURNMENT OF OPEN SESSION**