

The National Academies of
SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE

Panel on Measuring Contingent Work and Alternative Work Arrangements

Second Meeting - June 10, 2019

The National Academy of Sciences Building
The Board Room
2100 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20418

AGENDA

MEETING GOALS: During its first meeting, the panel heard from BLS experts about the history, measurement objectives, and past performance of the Contingent Worker Supplement (CWS) of the Current Population Survey (CPS). Working with BLS, the panel also sharpened the statement of task for the project. During this second meeting, the panel will continue information gathering by hearing presentations from data users and policymakers dealing with changing worker and employer dynamics. Sessions will include presentations and discussion of measurement objectives and policy needs, the measurement capabilities of household and other kinds of surveys, and the complementary (or possibly, in some cases, substitute) role of non-survey data such as administrative (e.g., tax) or commercial data.

MONDAY, JUNE 10

OPEN PUBLIC SESSION (NAS Building, The Board Room); 9:00 AM – 4:45 PM

Informal discussion with BLS staff and participants (breakfast provided outside The Board Room)

9:00 AM **Welcome, Introductions, Agenda, and Reminder of the Study Charge**

- Susan Houseman, *Panel Chair*

9:15 **SESSION 1: POLICY CONTEXT FOR MEASURING ALTERNATIVE WORK.** This session features presentations to help the panel round out its thinking about measurement objectives. Presenters will offer perspectives on (1) what information policymakers need to know and what questions remain unanswered (for example, how many people engage in supplemental work and what their motivations are), and (2) methodological and other considerations that allow data to be translated into policy. Definitions and boundaries for different categories of work—contingent, independent (many of whom do not consider themselves as “contingent” or temporary), web-mediated, etc.—will be discussed.

Legislative developments relating to alternative work. Senator Mark Warner is honorary co-chair of the Aspen Institute “Future of Work Initiative,” and his office has been active on issues pertaining to gig work. Carolina will update the panel on her work in Senator Warner’s office on relevant initiatives—such as proposed legislation that would direct the U.S. Treasury to study tax issues for gig economy workers—and the kinds of data needed to inform this work.

- **Carolina F. Young**, *Policy Advisor, Office of U.S. Senator Mark R. Warner* (20 minutes)

Update on Future of Work Initiative projects and plans. The Aspen Institute’s Future of Work Initiative seeks to identify policy solutions to the challenges facing workers in the 21st century. The Initiative, along with Cornell’s ILR School, produced and maintains the Gig Economy Data Hub, an online resource that provides accessible summaries of data sources on independent and non-traditional work. Recently, the team has written on portable benefits, tax simplification for independent workers, and worker training tax credits. The Institute has recently released the report, “Designing Portable Benefits: A Resource Guide for Policymakers.”

- **Alastair Fitzpayne**, *Director of the Aspen Institute*; **Shelly Steward**, *Research Manager, Future of Work Initiative* (20 minutes)

OPEN DISCUSSION: Michael Strain and David Weil lead (20 minutes)

10:15 **BREAK** (informal discussion and further Q&A with presenters; refreshments outside The Board Room)

10:30 **SESSION 1** (continued)

Worker wellbeing policy issues. The National Employment Law Project works on a broad spectrum of public policy issues associated with different types of worker arrangements, including portability of benefits, low wage worker rights, and worker classification. Maya will discuss aspects of alternative work arrangements that are important to be measured for policy purposes.

- **Maya Pinto**, *Senior Researcher and Policy Analyst, National Employment Law Project* (20 minutes)

Worker wellbeing measurement issues. Unpredictable work schedules, particularly for low-income/low-skill workers, affect the wellbeing and security of those involved. Susan will discuss measurement challenges and needs for informing public policy around work hour standards and the benefits of a multi-dimensional approach to estimating the prevalence of different types of work hour arrangements.

- **Susan Lambert**, *University of Chicago, School of Social Service Administration* (20 minutes)

Health and Safety. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health is a federal research agency that has made work arrangements a key focus of its recently established program on Healthy Work Design and Well-Being. Tim will describe this program and its recent attempts to define those work arrangements of greatest concern. He will also discuss the value of CWS data for NIOSH research, and suggest some ways in which expanded details on work arrangements could be of value.

- **Tim Bushnell**, *Economic Research and Support Office, NIOSH*
- **Toni Alterman**, *Division of Surveillance, Hazard Evaluations and Field Studies, NIOSH* (20 minutes)

Employer and broader market policy issues. The new economy requires policies designed to make new employment models work well not just for employees, but also employers who hire them and for the markets in which they operate. Gene will speak about his organization's work on key policy issues shaping the independent workforce movement that need to be informed by data collections, as well as about how to think about different categories of workers (e.g., part time and full time) within this movement.

- **Gene Zaino**, *Chief Executive of MBO Partners* (20 minutes)

OPEN DISCUSSION: Arne Kalleberg leads (25 minutes)

12:15 PM **WORKING LUNCH** (deliberate on morning presentations and discussions)

1:15 **SESSION 2: INSIGHTS ABOUT ALTERNATIVE WORK FROM OTHER (NON-BLS) SURVEYS.** Building on what was learned during meeting #1, this session includes presentations to help the panel assess the range of questions that can best be answered using household surveys, and which questions require other kinds of data (whether stand alone or linked to survey data), such as those derived from employer surveys, administrative/tax records, and commercial sources.

Federal Reserve Board surveys. Barbara will review results for 2018 from the Survey of Household Economics and Decision-making (SHED) and provide information about the survey's questions. She may also comment on findings from the Enterprising and Informal Work Activities (EIWA) Survey, which estimates that a high percentage of workers (36 percent in 2015) take part in freelance work.

- **Barbara Robles**, *Panel Member* (20 minutes)

Survey and policy work at the American Staffing Association. The ASA Staffing Employment and Sales Survey generates insights about intermediary employment arrangements. This Survey, conducted on a quarterly basis since 1992, collects information from staffing firms to estimate temporary and contract staffing industry employment, sales, and payroll. Cynthia and Steve will reflect on the Survey's general methodology, how

employment and payroll information differs from that generated from the CWS, what research is done using the Survey, and what policy questions it helps to address.

- **Cynthia Davidson** and **Steve Berchem**, *American Staffing Association* (20 minutes)

Urban-rural variation in informal work activities. Leif will describe the background, methods and findings of his collaborative research using a survey measuring geographic variation in informal work. He will address definitional questions about the types of informal work including unpaid and paid (off the books) work, the measurement strategy used to capture informal work, as well as (briefly) their findings on the prevalence of, reasons for, returns to, and correlates of informal work.

- **Leif Jensen**, *Penn State University* (20 minutes)

Gallup Education Consumer Pulse Survey. Susan and Katharine will provide an update on their work developing a survey module for this Gallup survey consisting of 13 questions on respondents' employment and the nature of their work arrangements. Goals of this work include assessing how well household surveys capture various types of contract and informal work and informing ways in which household surveys might be improved to better measure these types of work. Data collection is now complete, as is some initial analysis.

- **Susan Houseman** and **Katharine Abraham**, *Panel Members* (15 minutes)

OPEN DISCUSSION: Jennifer, Kristen, and Annette (who could also comment on her research revealing the difficulty of eliciting accurate responses from workers on the nature of employment arrangements) lead (30 minutes)

3:00 **BREAK** (informal discussion and further Q&A with presenters; refreshments outside The Board Room)

3:15 **SESSION 3: ADMINISTRATIVE (TAX) DATA ALTERNATIVES/COMPLEMENTS TO SURVEY DATA**. Building on the presentation by Diana Farrell on the use of commercial banking data during meeting #1, this session will further explore what can be learned from non-survey data sources, on their own or in combination with surveys, about alternative employment. The focus here will be on administrative data (as opposed to commercial data), specifically the benefits and limitations of using tax data.

What can be learned about alternative work arrangements from tax data? (1). Dmitri may also comment on his analyses of rideshare drivers using personal financial service data containing information on rideshare income, outside income, spending, and liquid assets.

- **Dmitri Koustas**, *University of Chicago* (20 minutes)

What can be learned about alternative work arrangements from tax data? (2). Mike and Diane will discuss the advantages and limitation of using tax data to measure various categories of alternative employment (including the size and scope of the platform economy), and how it can be used to inform tax policy.

- **Mike Udell** and **Diane Lim**, *District Economics Group* (20 minutes)

Census Bureau work combining data sources. Federal Research Data Centers (coupled with legislation) have allowed agencies and outside researchers to combine IRS data with existing Census surveys. Jim will discuss linking survey and tax data (in the context of LEHD or other programs) for the purpose of measuring independent contractor/self-employment work, and any implications that this might have for optimal design of the Contingent Worker Supplement.

- **Jim Spletzer**, *Center for Economic Studies, U.S. Census Bureau* (20 minutes)

OPEN DISCUSSION: Susan and Katharine lead (30 minutes)

4:45 PM ***PLANNED ADJOURNMENT OF OPEN SESSION***