



Projections Managing Partnership

## COMMUNICATING SEPARATIONS: TECHNICAL QUESTIONS & DETAILS

### WHY DID THE METHODOLOGY CHANGE?

The new Separations methodology was introduced because the workforce has changed dramatically throughout the last 20 years. When the Replacements methodology was introduced, workers often stayed in the same occupation from the time they entered the labor force to the time they retired. Now, workers are likely to have multiple occupations throughout their lifetime. The new Separations methodology reflects this trend in the workforce, and better reflects what BLS is hearing from stakeholders in workforce, education and the private sector.

### HOW ARE THE NEW PROJECTIONS CALCULATED?

The Separations methodology captures two types of separations: workers who leave the labor force entirely and workers who leave their occupation for a different one. The Separations methodology uses longitudinal and retrospective data from BLS demographic data, or the Current Population Survey, to identify workers who separate from their occupation. Regressions are run to identify the characteristics of workers that make them likely or not likely to either leave the labor force or transfer to a different occupation. Then, the results of these regressions are applied to current demographic data to estimate future separations.

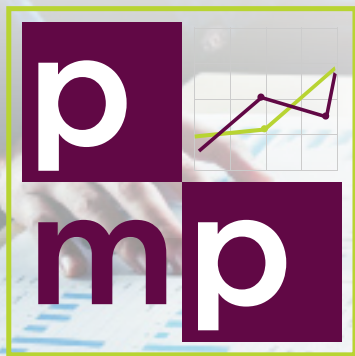
### HOW WILL STATES USE THE METHODOLOGY?

The Separations methodology estimates the number of workers who leave their occupation and need to be replaced by new entrants into the occupation. States will use the methodology to inform employment projections, helping stakeholders determine the number of openings occupations will have and identify where training and education is needed.

Rates are the same for all states, and will be applied to state-specific occupational staffing patterns. The methodology will take into account the distribution of occupations by state, but not state-specific demographics. Since the Separations methodology accounts for the distribution of occupations by states and not demographics, the methodology will not need to be adapted for smaller states.

### WHY ARE THERE MORE OPENINGS IN LOW-SKILL JOBS AND JOBS THAT REQUIRE LESS THAN A POST-SECONDARY DEGREE?

The new Separations methodology comprehensively and better captures the dynamics of the workforce. Workers in occupations that require less education are less likely to stay long-term at their occupation since they do not have high levels of occupation-specific skills.



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## COMMUNICATING SEPARATIONS: TECHNICAL QUESTIONS & DETAILS, CONTINUED

### **IS CURRENT CURRICULUM IN EDUCATION NOW OBSOLETE WITH THE ROLLOUT OF THE SEPARATIONS METHODOLOGY?**

Current curriculum in K-12 and higher education are not obsolete now that the Separations methodology has been implemented. If current curriculum meets labor market needs, the new method will not require any changes.

### **WILL THERE BE AN OCCUPATIONAL TEMPLATE OF HOW THE DATA WILL BE DISPLAYED AND EXPLANATIONS OF THE OPENINGS?**

There is not an occupational template of how data will be displayed. States are likely to display occupational data differently, just as states use a variety of templates for displaying other projections data.

### **WILL THE SEPARATIONS METHODOLOGY PROVIDE A BREAKDOWN OF JOB OPENINGS BY SEPARATIONS AND GROWTH?**

Yes, the Separations methodology will provide a breakdown of job openings by separations and growth.

### **WHY DOES THE NEW METHODOLOGY RUN OFF NATIONAL DATA WHEN LOCAL EMPLOYMENT DATA IS NEEDED?**

There is no source of local data for labor force transitions and demographics by occupation.

### **WHY ARE THERE SOME STARK DIFFERENCES IN OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS CREATED FROM THE REPLACEMENTS METHODOLOGY AND THE NEW SEPARATIONS METHODOLOGY?**

Differences in projections are due to methodological, not conceptual, factors.

The Separations methodology accounts for different reasons of job changes, such as changing careers or being promoted into management. For some occupations, particularly occupations that require less education, there will be a greater difference in employment projections. This is because the Separations methodology better accounts for workers leaving the occupation more frequently, which means more replacement workers will be needed.

The Replacements methodology wasn't inaccurate – the Separations methodology better captures and reflects today's dynamic workforce.

### **WILL THE BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS CHANGE THE METHODOLOGY AGAIN SOON?**

The Bureau of Labor Statistics has no plans to change the methodology again in the near term. BLS continuously seeks to improve and evolve data quality to ensure projections are a comprehensive overview of the changes in the workforce. Barring the introduction of new data sources, no changes are expected in the near future.