

# BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS (BLS)

## SUMMARY OF KEY CRITICAL SUPPORT AREAS AND LEADERSHIP

### Leadership

BLS commissioner Erika McEntarfer was fired by President Trump on August 1, 2025, because of the president's displeasure with revisions to the jobs estimates. Deputy commissioner William Wiatrowski is acting commissioner. McEntarfer was nominated by President Biden and confirmed by the U.S. Senate and in her second year of a fixed four-year term.

Approximately one-third of the 36 leadership positions at BLS are vacant, according to its website. The 13 vacancies include the commissioner and are spread across multiple offices, with the highest concentration—3 of 5 positions—in the Office of Employment and Unemployment Statistics.

### Budget

(see figure below, Table 2.2 in body of report, and our [online resource](#)):

- BLS's FY25 budget increased in nominal terms from \$698 million in FY24 to \$704 million in FY25 to maintain existing sample for the Current Population Survey (CPS): which amounts to:
  - an estimated 1.6% loss of purchasing power from FY24.
  - a 14.2% loss of purchasing power from FY09.
- The FY26 President's Budget Request is for \$648 million, which represents an 8% loss in purchasing power from FY25 actual.
  - The FY26 request also proposes to "reorganize the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bureau of Economic Analysis, and the Census Bureau at the Department of Commerce," with the details still to be shared.

### Staffing

(see Table 2.1 in body of report):

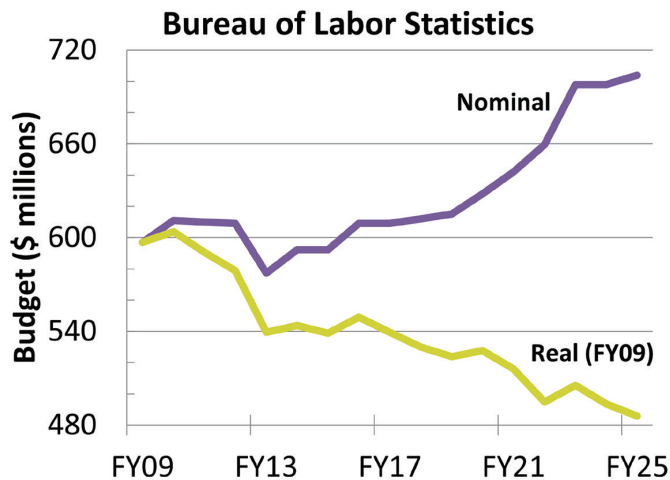
- BLS has lost an estimated 22% in staffing since FY24.
- The [FY26 President's Budget Request](#) is for a staffing level of 1,851, which would be a 10% decrease from the FY24 level of 2,058.

### Parent Agency

President Trump fired the BLS commissioner on August 1, 2025. On August 9, the Secretary of Labor issued [a statement](#) criticizing the BLS preliminary benchmark revision of the Current Employment Statistics estimates, and on September 10, the Labor Department Inspector General announced an investigation into how BLS collects and reports "closely watched economic data," including the Consumer Price Index (CPI), Producer Price Index (PPI), and employment and unemployment estimates.

### Statistical Integrity Safeguards

Because statistical agencies are hesitant or not allowed to communicate with outside entities and the parent agencies are communicating little information specific to statistical agencies, we have no agency-specific updates in this category beyond what we indicated above under "parent agency." A degree of open communication with outside stakeholders is an important component of statistical integrity safeguards and government transparency.



### Appropriations for BLS in Nominal and Inflation-Adjusted (“Real”) Dollars, Fiscal Years 2009–2025 \*

NOTE: The GDP deflator is used to adjust nominal appropriations for inflation since FY09.

SOURCE: [ASA online resources](#).

## IMPACTS

BLS has been buffeted by the Administration’s actions to oust the commissioner and cast doubt on the veracity of BLS estimates. It has lost critically important leadership staff. Its budget has been declining in real terms for many years in the face of increased costs to try to maintain business and household survey response rates. The president’s FY26 proposal would represent another large budget cut and constraints on staffing. Staff and budget constraints led BLS to cancel products, samples, and services in 2025. For example, BLS has had to [suspend data collection for the CPI in some parts of the country](#), has [discontinued a large number of PPI estimates](#), and has [suspended researcher access to confidential data in the Federal Statistical Research Data Center \(FSRDC\) network](#). It has also slowed its critically important work to modernize the Consumer Expenditure and Current Population Surveys to improve response. Its technical and data user advisory committees were disbanded by the Administration, as was the Federal Economic Statistics Advisory Committee (FESAC), which provided invaluable advice to BLS, BEA, and the Census Bureau on cooperative projects. More recently, [BLS reported](#) that data collection for roughly 15 percent of the CPI sample in 72 additional areas beyond those originally announced was suspended, temporarily reducing the number of collected prices and rents used to calculate the CPI. This fall, the 2024 Consumer Expenditures annual data release, originally scheduled for September 23, 2025, was [delayed to October 30](#) after BLS discovered a discrepancy in tabulations related to a questionnaire redesign. These data have not yet been released, due to the government shutdown (October 1–November 13, 2025).

## SUMMARY

We are updating our rating for parent agency support from Good to CHALLENGING and our rating for statistical integrity safeguards from Mixed to CHALLENGING, based on the arbitrary firing of the BLS commissioner and unfounded attacks by the Administration on BLS methods and objectivity. We are retaining our rating of BLS resources as CHALLENGING. According to our 2024 report rubric, this rating means, “The agency’s efforts to meet its Evidence Act responsibilities are challenged.”

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the all-agency recommendations in the body of the report, we repeat our recommendations from 2024 that the Department of Labor should:

- ... support ... BLS [and] respect its statistical integrity safeguards; and
- Regularly include BLS in discussions with appropriators to explain the motivation behind BLS budget requests, including challenges faced by the agency and benefits of initiatives.

## BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS: 2024 HEALTH ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

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For full text, see <https://bit.ly/NationsDataAtRiskBLS>.

The July 2024 assessment of BLS found it plays a critical role in measuring the performance of the U.S. economy and workforce. BLS produces key economic indicators at the national level in addition to data for states and regions on payroll employment, unemployment, consumer and producer prices, labor productivity, working conditions, and other workforce characteristics.

### KEY SUCCESSES AND STRENGTHS

BLS has demonstrated innovation in such areas as data granularity and timeliness, data quality, analytic tools, and collaboration. For example, BLS published household distributions of BEA's personal consumption expenditures (see [Distribution of Personal Consumption Expenditures : U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)). BLS is also conducting research on a comprehensive measure of consumption, based on Consumer Expenditure Survey and American Time Use Survey data, to include home production and flows of services from home and vehicle ownership (see [Building a Comprehensive Consumption Measure : U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)). Such a measure is important to pursue because many economists consider consumption to be a better estimate of economic well-being than measures of income or expenditures. BLS also introduced experimental industry-level measures of Total Factor Productivity in collaboration with BEA; expanded Total Factor Productivity to include non-manufacturing industries and 10 new major industry groups; and produced annual employment projections (formerly biennial). BLS data are widely used. Annual output includes 2.5 million downloads; application programming interface (API) usage at 20 million; website page views at 170 million; hundreds of citations of *Monthly Labor Review* articles and research based on the National Longitudinal Surveys; and 1 million media mentions.

### CRITICAL CHALLENGES AND VULNERABILITIES

BLS's purchasing power has declined by 14% since FY09, and declining response rates threaten the reliability of its major surveys that underlie key economic indicators, such as monthly payroll jobs, unemployment, and price changes.

### 2024 SUPPORT RATINGS SUMMARY

The assessment assigned:

- Statistical integrity safeguards: **Mixed**, due to BLS's lack of statutory protections for statistical integrity safeguards;
- Parent agency support: **Good**; and
- Budget/staffing: **Challenging**, reflecting long-term funding erosion such that while BLS has been able to innovate, it has not been able to carry out in a timely manner the much-needed redesign of at least two of its major surveys, thereby threatening their long-term viability at the same quality level.