



Projections Managing Partnership

## SEPARATIONS METHODOLOGY: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### WHY ARE EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS IMPORTANT, AND HOW SHOULD THEY BE USED?

Projections are used to give people an idea of what is expected to happen in the future in regards to occupations. Projections help us determine:

- *What areas of the economy are expected to see growth, decline and what areas of the economy are growing the fastest.*
- *What occupations will have more openings than others, allowing stakeholders to better prepare and train the workforce.*

But, projections are just that: projections. No matter the methodology, there will never be a methodology to perfectly predict the exact number of openings in the workforce. Projections are to be used for:

- *Relative comparisons for occupations.*
- *To help inform where training for the future workforce should be focused.*
- *They are **not** intended to be used as specific targets, such as the exact number of people who should go through a training program.*

The Separations methodology is based upon national data and is meant to be used by states as a guide to state-level projections. At the state, regional and local levels, projections will vary by geography and time. Just as the workforce and economy has evolved nationally, it has evolved differently for each state, which will impact how states use projections to identify in-demand occupations and meet the state's training needs.

### HOW DOES THE NEW SEPARATIONS METHODOLOGY IMPACT THE ABILITY TO COMPARE WITH PREVIOUS NUMBERS OR LOOK AT TRENDS?

The new methodology incorporates past data, patterns and trends to generate projections. The new methodology is consistent with historical patterns, although this data isn't published. The new Separations numbers will vary from the previously published projections using the Replacements methodology because of methodological, not conceptual, factors.

- *Projections from the past Replacements methodology should **not** be compared with projections derived from the Separations methodology.*
- *Any past projections become outdated when actual employment catches up with them or new projections are released, and are no longer an accurate representation of the workforce.*
- *If an individual compared the number of openings from 2016-2026 using the Separations methodology with the number of openings from 2014-2024 using the Replacements methodology, the comparison would lack meaning because the methodologies vary so widely.*
- *To compare historical trends to current projections, a practitioner should use actual employment figures from the time period. When new projections are released, old projections become obsolete.*



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### **WILL THE SEPARATIONS METHODOLOGY IMPACT INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS?**

The Separations methodology will not impact industry projections. The methodology for producing industry projections is unchanged and independent of the Separations methodology at both the state and national level.

### **HOW CAN USERS ACCESS THE NEW SEPARATIONS METHODOLOGY?**

Users can access the new Separations methodology through the Bureau of Labor Statistics' website: [www.bls.gov/emp/ep\\_separations\\_methods.htm](http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_separations_methods.htm).

### **DOES THE NEW METHODOLOGY TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE GIG ECONOMY OR SELF-EMPLOYED WORKERS?**

Individuals who are self-employed as their primary occupation would be captured through the occupation in which they specialize.

For example, a self-employed construction worker would be classified as a job in the construction industry. For many individuals who work 'gigs,' like driving for a ride-share service, this isn't their primary occupation. Therefore, this isn't taken into account for the Separations methodology.

### **WHERE CAN I GET MORE TECHNICAL INFORMATION ON THE SEPARATIONS METHODOLOGY?**

Additional information and frequently asked questions can be found at: [https://www.bls.gov/emp/ep\\_separations\\_faqs.htm](https://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_separations_faqs.htm).

### **WHAT IS THE TIMELINE OF THE NEW SEPARATIONS METHODOLOGY?**

**Oct. 24, 2017:** The Separations methodology was implemented and 2016 - 2026 national projections were released.

**September 2017:** States began preparing short-term projections using the Separations methodology.  
**February 2018:** States finalize results.

**January 2018:** States begin preparing long-term projections using the Separations methodology.  
**June 2018:** States finalize occupation results.

