

Call for Papers

Labor in the New Economy

Sponsored by the NBER Conference on Research in Income and Wealth

Popular press accounts commonly report on ways in which today's labor market is believed to differ from that of earlier decades. Themes explored in these accounts include the changing demographics of the labor force, the increased prevalence of flexible and alternative employment arrangements, declining job stability, increased wage inequality, the demise of defined benefit pension plans, and, more generally, the fear that "good jobs" are disappearing. This CRIW conference aims to examine what we know and don't know about today's labor market and how it has changed. The goals of the conference are to document significant labor market trends, to explore the causes and consequences of these trends, and to shed light on important issues regarding the measurement of key trends and their effects.

The conference will take place November 16-17, 2007 in Washington DC, with a pre-conference for the paper presenters tentatively planned for July 2007 as part of the NBER Summer Institute. The program committee consists of Katharine Abraham (University of Maryland), Mike Harper (Bureau of Labor Statistics), and Jim Spletzer (Bureau of Labor Statistics). We expect the proceedings from this NBER-CRIW conference to be published in an edited volume.

The program committee welcomes submissions of abstracts for inclusion in the program. Topics of interest include the following:

Labor Inputs

- Demographic trends and changing labor force participation rates for groups such as young men, women, and persons of retirement age;
- Trends in the level and composition of immigration, the effects of immigration on wages and productivity, and the types of jobs held by immigrants;
- Trends in worker skills, including trends in education and experience, the growth of community colleges, employer-provided training, and the returns to skill investments.

The Employment Relationship

- Alternative employment arrangements, broadly defined to include temporary help services, contingent work, contracting out, outsourcing, employee leasing, professional employment organizations, independent contractors, and off-the-books employment;
- Alternative and flexible work schedules, such as telework, flexiplace, shift work, and off-hours work;
- Self-employment and entrepreneurship.

Wages, Benefits, and Compensation

- Trends in inequality of wages and benefits;
- Pensions and the shift from defined benefit to defined contribution pension plans;
- Trends in health care costs and the implications of these trends for the labor market;

- The restructuring of pension and health plans, and the effects of such restructuring on workers and firms;
- Alternative methods of pay, such as stock options, profit sharing, and incentive pay;
- The quality of new jobs.

Labor Market Structure

- Globalization and the effects of offshoring on workers and employers;
- The effects of technological change on productivity and wages;
- The effects of business practices and the composition of businesses (births, deaths, and mergers) on labor market measures;
- Turnover, broadly defined to include hires, separations, job-to-job flows, job creation and job destruction, and job stability; and empirical implications of recent theoretical advances in the analysis of turnover;
- New analyses and new themes resulting from new data, such as longitudinal linked employer-employee microdata, time-use data, or linkages of confidential data across statistical agencies under CIPSEA.

To be considered for the conference program, abstracts should be submitted by July 15th 2006 to:
Conference Department, NBER
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Cambridge MA 12138
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