

The Great Federal Data Re-Opening Of 2025: Data Methodology Cheat Sheet

November 13, 2025 - By Chris Harrison

- This note offers a succinct summary of major monthly economic release methodologies, supporting our guide to the potential rescheduling of data releases with the government now re-opened.
- It primarily focuses on BLS releases, likely the first agency to announce an adjusted schedule. The BLS in 2013 offered an updated schedule at ~4.30pm ET on day one of the re-opening although a Yahoo Finance reporter suggested Thursday this updated schedule could be produced "in the coming days".
- The details give a better understanding as to why there's a good chance the October CPI report will be cancelled along with the high likelihood of not receiving an unemployment rate with the October report.
- We also summarize the trend decline in key survey response rates prior to the shutdown, bringing with it scope for greater volatility from month-to-month releases.
- This might deteriorate further ahead, with The Friends Of The BLS [noting](#) that the BLS has lost almost 25% of its staff since February and that one third of BLS leadership positions are vacant. That will also have an impact on the BLS's ability to catch-up with the extensive backlog of releases.

Expanding on our first guide to the potential schedule of official data releases with the government now re-opened, [here](#), this follow-up offers a concise summary of how these data releases are produced. It helps add context to the below summary table from our previous FAQs approach as well as giving clues as to which releases could be more volatile than usual owing to their collection methodologies.

Updates since the table was published on Nov 11: NEC's Hassett said the September nonfarm payrolls report could be released next week (speaking on Fox News, Nov 13). Early messaging from the administration around key October reports has been inconsistent: White House Press Sec Leavitt said there likely won't be October reports for CPI or payrolls (at a press conference, Nov 12) whilst Hassett said the October jobs report will be released without the unemployment rate, which we take to mean it will only release the establishment survey details in a split that we had thought was likely. Yahoo Finance's Jennifer Schonberger has reported on [X.com](#) that the September nonfarm payrolls report will likely be out next week, and that the BLS will produce an updated release schedule "in the coming days", citing the Labor Department itself as her source.

Key Data Points Postponed Due To Government Shutdown

	Period Covered	Originally Scheduled	Possible Release	Notes	Gov't Agency
CPI	September	Wed Oct 15	Released On Oct 24		
	October	Thu Nov 13	Possibly cancelled	May be combined w Nov Release	BLS
	November	Wed Dec 10	1 Week Later	May be combined w Oct data	
Nonfarm Payrolls	September	Fri Oct 3	Nov 14 - Nov 18		
	October	Fri Nov 7	3-4 Week Delay	Possible truncated report (no household survey)	BLS
	November	Fri Dec 5	1 Week Delay		
GDP	Q3 Advance	Thu Oct 30	Late Nov		BEA
PCE	September	Fri Oct 31	Late Nov		
	October	Wed Nov 26	N/A	Price data relies on CPI/PPI/Imp Price reports	BEA
PPI	September	Thu Oct 16	Late Nov		BLS
	October	Fri Nov 14	Early Dec	Data collection may be less reliable than usual	
Import/Export Prices	September	Fri Oct 17	Late Nov		BLS
	October	Tue Nov 18	Early Dec		
Retail Sales	September	Thu Oct 16	Late Nov		
	October	Fri Nov 14	Early Dec	May be a combined release	Census Bureau

Source: BLS/BEA/Census Bureau, MNI Estimates

Note that we're focusing on BLS releases in this note, with our expectation that this will be the first major stats agency to release an updated schedule. We mainly stick to Principal Federal Economic Indicators (PFEIs) as the BLS tends to prioritize these. The exception here is the JOLTS report here with the ongoing close attention on the labor market, with the particularly large decline in its response rate highlighting that it's not a priority for the agency.

NFP Report: Establishment Survey

- **Variables:** Nonfarm payrolls by industry, average hours worked and average hourly earnings.
- **Definition:** "Employees on nonfarm payrolls are those who worked or received pay for any part of the reference pay period, including people on paid leave. People are counted in each job they hold. Hours and earnings data are produced for the private sector".
- **Time period:** Reference period is the pay period including the 12th, which may or may not correspond directly to the calendar week.
- **Scope:** About 121k businesses and government agencies, representing ~631k individual worksites. The active sample includes ~1/3 of all nonfarm payroll jobs.
- **Data collection:** Computer interview at first before self-reporting. "All new samples are solicited by computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI), and data are collected for the first 5 months via this mode. After the initiation period, many sample units are transferred to one of several less costly reporting methods that are self-initiated by the respondent. The CES offers responding businesses a choice of reporting modes in an effort to maximize response rates within the program budget. Respondents can report by web, Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), CATI, Touchtone Data Entry (TDE), or other collection methods."
- **90% confidence intervals:** +/- 136k for monthly change in payrolls.
- **Regular revisions:** Revisions to prior two months with each monthly report as new information is processed and seasonal factors recalculated.
- **Annual revisions:** Annual benchmark revision due with the January report (released in Feb) to the previous March level based on more thorough QCEW data.

NFP	report	reference period	release	working days
	Nov'24	12/11/2024	06/12/2024	19
	Dec'24	12/12/2024	10/01/2025	22
	Jan	12/01/2025	07/02/2025	20
	Feb	12/02/2025	07/03/2025	18
	Mar	12/03/2025	04/04/2025	18
	Apr	12/04/2025	02/05/2025	15
	May	12/05/2025	06/06/2025	20
	Jun	12/06/2025	03/07/2025	16
	Jul	12/07/2025	01/08/2025	15
	Aug	12/08/2025	05/09/2025	19
	Sep	12/09/2025	03/10/2025*	16

Reference is the twelfth day of the month

* original release date, still delayed

NFP Report: Household Survey

- **Variables:** This provides a lot of the ratio-based variables such as the unemployment rate, underemployment (U-6) rate and labor force participation rate, plus areas such as those not at work due to bad weather.
- **Definition:** "People are classified as employed if they did any work at all as paid employees during the reference week; worked in their own business, profession, or on their own farm; or worked without pay at least 15 hours in a family business or farm. People are also counted as employed if they were temporarily absent from their jobs because of illness, bad weather, vacation, labor-management disputes, or personal reasons." Includes those on un-paid leave.
- **Time period:** "The fieldwork is conducted during the calendar week that includes the 19th of the month. The questions refer to activities during the prior week; that is, the week that includes the 12th of the month."
- **Scope:** About 60k households. Sample selected to reflect the entire civilian noninstitutional population
- **Data collection:** Interview-heavy, the survey is conducted by the US Census Bureau for the BLS. "The CPS questionnaire is a completely computerized document that is administered by Census Bureau field representatives across the country through both personal and telephone interviews. Additional telephone interviewing is conducted from the Census Bureau's two centralized collection facilities in Jeffersonville, Indiana and Tucson, Arizona."
- **90% confidence intervals:** At u/e rate of 6.0%, +/- 300k for chg in unemployment, +/- 0.2pps for u/e rate.
- **Regular revisions:** No monthly revisions.
- **Annual revisions:** Seasonal factors revised annually with the Dec report (published in Jan) before population control adjustments to Jan data levels, which muddies looking at unadjusted M/M changes in levels of employment, unemployment etc
- **Other:** Limited to those 16 years and older. Individuals only counted once even if hold multiple jobs.

CPI

- **Definition:** A family of indexes that measures price change experienced by urban consumers.
- **Time period:** Collected during the entire month. "CPI data is published monthly, with the index value representing an estimate of the price level for the month as a whole, rather than a specific date."
- **Scope:** Records prices of ~80k items each month.
- **Data collection:** "BLS data collectors visit (in person, on the web, or using apps) or call thousands of retail stores, service establishments, rental units, and doctors' offices, all over the United States to obtain information on the prices of the thousands of items used to track and measure price changes in the CPI. [...] Most repricing is done by personal visit from a CPI data collector, but in other cases repricing is done by a website visit or by telephone. During each engagement, the data collector collects price data on a specific good or service that was precisely defined during an earlier visit."
- **Collection frequency:** "Prices for each item in the commodities and services survey are collected either every month or every other month, depending on the type of good or service and its location. Food at home, energy, and selected other items are priced monthly. So, too, are prices for all other commodity and service items in the three largest publication areas: New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago. Elsewhere, prices are collected bimonthly for the remaining commodity and service items; those are assigned to either even- or odd-numbered months for pricing."
- **Regular revisions:** None. "The CPI, unlike many other statistical series, does not rely on respondents to send data to the BLS national office; CPI data collectors collect almost all of the data for the CPI-U and CPI-W. Virtually all data are received in time for the calculation of indexes for the appropriate month, so routine revisions to account for late-arriving data are not necessary."
- **Annual revisions:** With every January CPI report, seasonal adjustment factors are recalculated to reflect price movements from the just-completed calendar year. Effectively, this impacts M/M % changes for individual months but not % Y/Y (which are based on NSA data).
- **Weights:** Updated annually (beginning with 2023), reflecting spending from two years prior.

CPI	report	reference period	release	working days
	Nov'24	30/11/2024	11/12/2024	8
	Dec'24	31/12/2024	15/01/2025	12
	Jan	31/01/2025	12/02/2025	9
	Feb	28/02/2025	12/03/2025	9
	Mar	31/03/2025	10/04/2025	9
	Apr	30/04/2025	13/05/2025	10
	May	31/05/2025	11/06/2025	8
	Jun	30/06/2025	15/07/2025	12
	Jul	31/07/2025	12/08/2025	9
	Aug	31/08/2025	11/09/2025	9
	Sep	30/09/2025	15/10/2025*	12

Prices collected across the month, showing end of month for consistency

* original release date, eventually released Oct 24

PPI

- **Definition:** The PPI is a family of indexes that measures the average change over time in the selling prices received by domestic producers of goods and services.
- **Time period:** Establishments asked to report their prices as of Tuesday of the week containing the 13th of the month.
- **Scope:** Approx 65k prices are solicited each month from over 16k reporters (as of Mar 2023, a big change from 100k prices from 25k establishments in Dec 2021 FAQs). The PPI program covers ~72% of the service sector's output as measured by revenue reported in the 2007 economic census. About 10k PPIs for individual products and groups of products are released each month.
- **Data collection:** Visited by field economist who sets the process up. Once cooperation obtained, the establishment reports prices for the selected products, usually on a monthly basis, using a secure website. A BLS calls if the establishment fails to report or reports incomplete information. Establishments continue to report until a new sample is selected for the industry – after 7-8 years on average.
- **Regular revisions:** Every index is recalculated on a monthly basis for up to 4 months after initial release, to take into account late survey reports and corrections by respondents.
- **Annual revisions:** Previously adjusted seasonally adjusted indexes are then subject to annual revisions in January when new seasonal factors are calculated and applied to the most recent five years of data.
- **Weights:** Updated every five years, linked to the economic censuses.

PPI	report	reference period	release	working days
	Nov'24	12/11/2024	12/12/2024	23
	Dec'24	10/12/2024	14/01/2025	26
	Jan	14/01/2025	13/02/2025	23
	Feb	11/02/2025	13/03/2025	23
	Mar	11/03/2025	11/04/2025	24
	Apr	15/04/2025	15/05/2025	23
	May	13/05/2025	12/06/2025	23
	Jun	10/06/2025	16/07/2025	27
	Jul	15/07/2025	14/08/2025	23
	Aug	12/08/2025	10/09/2025	22
	Sep	09/09/2025	16/10/2025*	28

Reference is Tuesday of the week containing the 13th of the month

* original release date, still delayed

JOLTS (not a PFEI)

- **Definition:** Job openings if the specific position exists, the job could start within 30 days and the employer is actively recruiting workers from outside the establishment to fill the position
- **Time period:** Job openings open on the last day of the month
- **Scope:** Stratified random sample of ~21k nonfarm business and government establishments. Comprises the BLS QCEW plus FRA for railroad establishments.
- **Data collection:** "Initially, data are collected using Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI), and later using web collection. Respondents in CATI collection are called by Data Collection Center interviewers who enter data directly into a computer. Respondents are in CATI collection for the first three months they are in the sample. Respondents assigned to web collection, having first responded for three months in CATI, enter their data online at their convenience."
- **Regular revisions:** Preliminary estimates subject to revision for 1 month after initial release.
- **Annual revisions:** With January report (in Feb), with five years of data subject to revision.
- **Other:** JOLTS employment levels are ratio-adjusted to CES employment levels.

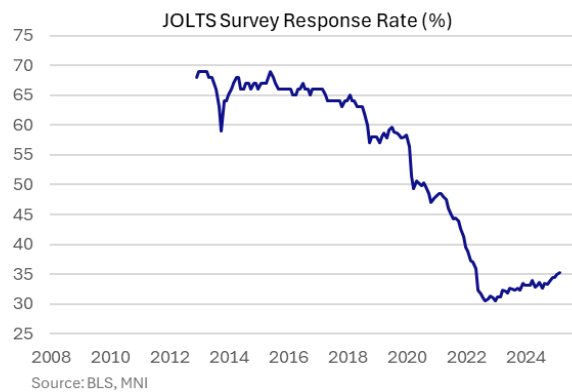
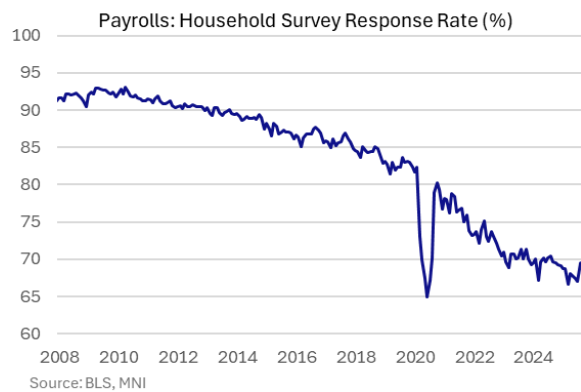
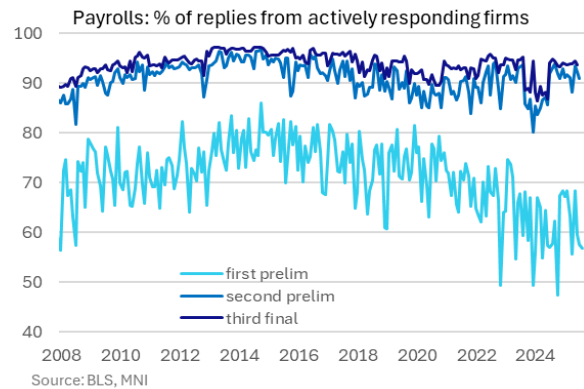
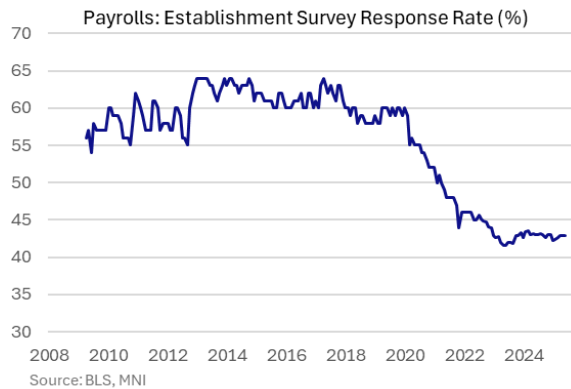
JOLTS	report	reference period	release	working days
	Nov'24	29/11/2024	07/01/2025	28
	Dec'24	31/12/2024	04/02/2025	26
	Jan	31/01/2025	11/03/2025	28
	Feb	28/02/2025	01/04/2025	23
	Mar	31/03/2025	29/04/2025	22
	Apr	30/04/2025	03/06/2025	25
	May	30/05/2025	01/07/2025	23
	Jun	30/06/2025	29/07/2025	22
	Jul	31/07/2025	03/09/2025	25

Reference is last business day of the month

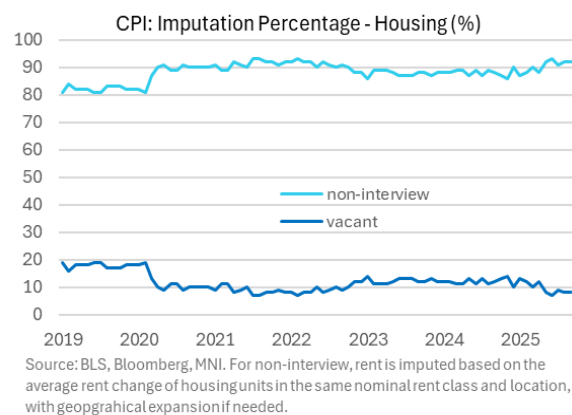
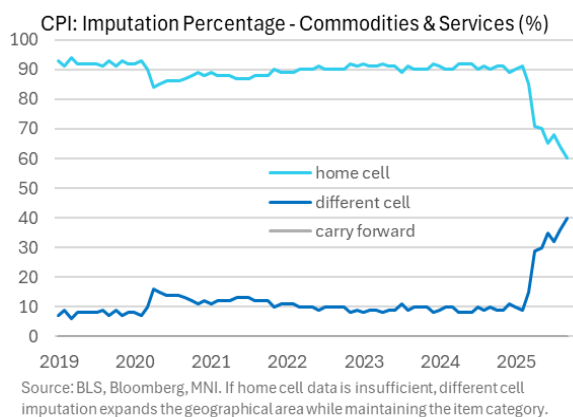
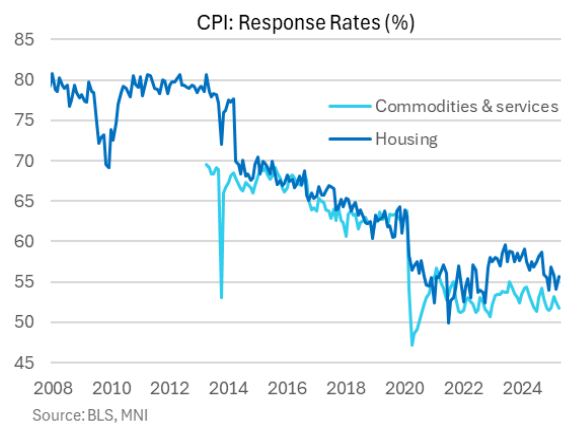
Retail Sales (a PFEI, released by the US Census Bureau)

- **Definition:** Sales for retail and food service establishments. A retail establishment is one that sells merchandise to the general public (final consumers).
- **Release schedule (advance):** Advance report (MARTS) released 9-10 business days after the end of the reference month before the final report (MRTS) one month later.
- **Release schedule (final):** The final report (MRTS) is released one month later, so about six weeks after the end of the reference month.
- **Time period (advance):** "Reported data are for activity taking place during the previous month. Forms are mailed 5 working days before the end of the reporting month and responses are due 2 working days after the reporting month."
- **Time period (final):** Sales during the month.
- **Scope:** MARTS sample of approx 4.8k units selected from the MRTS sample of about 13k units. Sample redesigned and reselected for MARTS approx every 2.5-3 years, MRTS sample approx. every 5 years.
- **Data collection:** "A mail-out/mail-back survey of about 13,000 retail businesses with paid employees; supplemented by estimates for new employers and missed employers obtained from benchmarking to the Annual Retail Trade Survey."

Collection Quality Of Major BLS Labor Releases



Collection Quality Of BLS CPI Release



There aren't response rates for the PPI survey but there looks to have been a large decline in the survey size going off BLS webpages, to ~65k prices solicited each month from over 16k reporters (Mar 2023 update) vs 100k prices from 25k establishments (Dec 2021 FAQs).