
The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)

Summer Data Challenge

Are you a researcher interested in exploring how labor programs and policies serve and reach disadvantaged communities?

DOL invites applications to its Summer Data Challenge.

Applications are due by April 19, 2021 at 12 pm ET.

Addressing equity disparities in labor-related policies and programs is a longstanding priority of the Department of Labor (DOL). This issue was recently highlighted in the January 2021 [Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities](#), which directs federal agencies to better understand how they are reaching disadvantaged communities, and then to address gaps that may be present in order to raise standards for marginalized communities and the population as a whole.

Considering the importance of understanding equity gaps, the Department of Labor invites emerging and established scholars to submit proposals to its first Summer Data Challenge. The purpose of the Summer Data Challenge is to support rigorous research using public data, including DOL data, or other administrative data to examine how well DOL policies, protections, and programs serve traditionally underserved communities. DOL is especially interested in understanding how data can speak to barriers that underserved communities and individuals may face to enrollment or access to benefits, services, and protections, as well as agency procurement and contracting opportunities. This includes DOL programs such as unemployment insurance; workforce training programs; and enforcement protections of the Wage and Hour Division, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and the Employee Benefits Security Administration, among others. Populations of interest include but are not limited to those from communities traditionally underserved due to race, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, income, geography, immigrant status, veteran and disability status. Analyses may test new methods, test hypotheses, or analyze data to demonstrate meaningful gaps in our knowledge and, ideally, propose practical solutions to fill those gaps.

The Summer Data Challenge expects to fund five researchers or research teams, with individual awards ranging from \$10,000–\$30,000. Both established and emerging researchers are welcome to apply, but senior researchers' proposals must include emerging researcher co-authors. Awardees will complete their research between June 1, 2021 and September 15, 2021, culminating in one high-quality working paper, data and

replication files (as possible), and two briefings on the findings, to be published on the DOL website.

Eligibility: Both established (received Ph.D. more than five years prior) and emerging researchers (current Ph.D. candidates and researchers who completed their Ph.D. no more than five years prior) are encouraged to apply, but established researchers' proposals must include emerging researchers as co-authors.

Application Process: Submissions should include C.V.s for all researchers and a proposal of no more than 2,000 words (inclusive of references, tables, and figures) that clearly identifies (1) which DOL or labor-related policies or programs will be studied, (2) which traditionally underserved communities or populations will be studied, (3) which data sources will be used and a detailed description of those sources (including DOL sources and/or other sources, if applicable), (4) which methods of analysis will be used, and (5) expected research output (e.g., description of anticipated tables, figures, or regression models). Analyses may test new methods to collect or analyze existing data, test hypotheses, or analyze data to demonstrate meaningful gaps in our knowledge and, ideally, propose practical solutions to fill those gaps. Proposals must also include a plan that clearly highlights how all analyses and final products will be completed by September 15, 2021.

Selection: Proposals will be judged on the following criteria: (1) rigor: the technical quality of the proposal, (2) relevance: the degree to which their proposed analysis will reveal how DOL policies, protections, and programs affect traditionally underserved communities; (3) feasibility: the likelihood of successful implementation of the proposed research design in light of described data and analysis; and (4) creativity: the degree to which the proposal is creative in choice of topic or method, and the degree to which it makes innovative use of publicly available DOL data on its own or merged with other external data. DOL will competitively select winners based on the above factors while ensuring that the balance of awards reflects a diversity in perspective and topics, including the scholars' own backgrounds, disciplines, methods, and institutions.

Allowable expenses: In addition to individual support (direct and indirect institutional costs) for conducting analyses, funding may also be used to purchase data access as relevant. Funds may not be used to purchase computers or other equipment. Expenses for travel to Washington D.C. for the purpose of presenting at DOL or other program events is permitted (pending COVID restrictions) and will be reimbursed at the Federal Per Diem rate. All other research travel must be specified in the budget of the application and will be evaluated as part of the overall application package.

Final products: By September 15th, 2021, awardees will produce 1) a brief, high-quality working paper, 2) a dataset and replication files, as possible (see more below), and 3) two DOL and/or public briefings.

If public data is used, researchers must submit a replication file with scripts (code) and data in R and/or Stata.

If new, non-confidential data are created, researchers must submit a public-use dataset, and replication file with scripts (code) and data in R and/or Stata. DOL is willing to negotiate the timing of when these data are published on the DOL website to accommodate academic publications.

Final products will be subject to an external technical review before publication by DOL. Researchers will be invited to present their work at up to two briefings.

DOL has engaged Manhattan Strategy Group to oversee the Summer 2021 Data Challenge. For application materials and program information, visit www.manhattanstrategy.com/DOLdatachallenge.aspx.

For additional information or questions about the program, contact MSG at datachallenge@manhattanstrategy.com.