Contingent and Alternative Employment Arrangements, May 2017
Gig economy

- No official BLS definition of “gig economy” or “gig workers”
- Researchers use many different definitions
  - Many include contingent workers
  - Some include those in alternative work arrangements
- CWS data allow researchers to use own definition of “gig”
Contingent Worker Supplement (CWS), May 2017

Collected information on whether workers had:

- Contingent jobs—jobs that are temporary or not expected to last
- Alternative employment arrangements
  - Independent contractors
  - Temporary help agency workers
  - On-call workers
  - Contract company workers

Similar supplements were conducted in February of 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, and 2005

Data refer to sole or main job of employed people
Defining and estimating the number of contingent workers

- Contingent workers do not have an explicit or implicit contract for continuing employment

- To determine if employment is contingent, CWS asks:
  - If the job is temporary or not expected to continue
  - How long the worker expects to be able to hold their job
  - How long the worker has held their job

- People who do not expect to continue in their current jobs for personal reasons are NOT contingent workers
Defining and estimating the number of contingent workers

Estimate 1: Wage and salary workers who have worked at their jobs for a year or less and expect their jobs to last less than another year

Estimate 2: Adds self-employed and independent contractors

Estimate 3: Adds other workers who do not expect their jobs to last
## Estimates of contingent workers, May 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimates of contingent workers</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent of total employed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Estimate 1:</strong> Wage and salary workers who expect their jobs to last 1 year or less</td>
<td>2.0 million</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Estimate 2:</strong> All workers who expect their jobs to last 1 year or less, including the self-employed and independent contractors</td>
<td>2.5 million</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Estimate 3:</strong> All workers who do not expect their jobs to last</td>
<td>5.9 million</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contingent workers as a percent of total employed, February 1995-2005 and May 2017

Source: Contingent Worker Supplements, Current Population Survey
Age distribution of contingent and noncontingent workers, May 2017

Contingent workers

- 16 to 24 years, 28%
- 25 to 54 years, 55%
- 55 years and older, 17%

Noncontingent workers

- 16 to 24 years, 12%
- 55 years and older, 23%
- 25 to 54 years, 65%

Contingent workers as a percent of total employed by sex, May 2017

Percent

3.8
Men

3.9
Women

Contingent workers as a percent of total employed by race and ethnicity, May 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino ethnicity</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Persons of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity may be of any race.
Educational attainment of contingent and noncontingent workers, age 25 to 64, May 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Attainment</th>
<th>Contingent Workers</th>
<th>Noncontingent Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree or higher</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college or associate degree</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduates, no college</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than a high school diploma</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Full- and part-time status of contingent and noncontingent workers, May 2017

Contingent workers

- Part time: 41%
- Full time: 59%

Noncontingent workers

- Part time: 17%
- Full time: 83%

Occupation of contingent and noncontingent workers, May 2017

Percent distribution

Contingent workers
- Production, transportation, and material moving occupations: 12%
- Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations: 15%
- Sales and office occupations: 16%
- Service occupations: 17%
- Management, professional, and related occupations: 39%

Noncontingent workers
- Production, transportation, and material moving occupations: 12%
- Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations: 9%
- Sales and office occupations: 22%
- Service occupations: 17%
- Management, professional, and related occupations: 41%

Contingent workers by their preference for contingent or noncontingent work, May 2017

- Prefer contingent employment: 33%
- Prefer noncontingent employment: 55%
- It depends: 10%
- Not available: 3%

Percent of contingent and noncontingent workers with health insurance coverage, February 2005 and May 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Contingent Workers</th>
<th>Noncontingent Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Health insurance coverage from any source**

**Employer-provided health insurance coverage**

Percent of contingent and noncontingent workers eligible for employer-provided pension or retirement plans, May 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Contingent workers</th>
<th>Noncontingent workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eligible for employer-provided</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retirement plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Included in employer-provided</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retirement plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Median usual weekly earnings of full-time contingent and noncontingent workers, May 2017

- Contingent workers: $685
- Noncontingent workers: $886

Four alternative employment arrangements

1. Independent contractors
2. On-call workers
3. Temporary help agency workers
4. Workers provided by contract firms
Defining the four alternative employment arrangements

1. **Independent contractors** said they were independent contractors, consultants, or freelance workers

2. **On-call workers** are called into work only when they are needed, although they can be scheduled to work for several days or weeks in a row
Defining the four alternative employment arrangements

3. **Temporary help agency workers** are paid by a temporary help agency, whether or not their job was temporary.

4. **Workers provided by contract firms** are employed by a company that provides them or their services to others under contract. They are usually assigned to only one customer, and they usually work at that customer’s worksite.
Contingent work and alternative employment arrangements
Workers in alternative arrangements as a percent of total employed, February 1995-2005 and May 2017

Source: Contingent Worker Supplements, Current Population Survey

BLS
Age distribution of workers in alternative and traditional employment arrangements, May 2017

Note: Data may not sum to totals due to rounding.
Workers in alternative arrangements as a percent of total employed by gender, May 2017

- **Independent contractors**: Men - 8.4%, Women - 5.3%
- **On-call workers**: Men - 1.7%, Women - 1.7%
- **Temporary help agency workers**: Men - 0.9%, Women - 0.9%
- **Workers provided by contract firms**: Men - 0.8%, Women - 0.4%

Workers in alternative arrangements as a percent of total employed by race and ethnicity, May 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black or African American</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic or Latino ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent contractors</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-call workers</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary help agency workers</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers provided by contract firms</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Persons of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity may be of any race.
Educational attainment of workers in alternative and traditional arrangements, age 25 to 64, May 2017

Percent distribution

- **Independent contractors**
  - Bachelor's degree or higher: 39%
  - Some college or associate degree: 27%
  - High school graduates, no college: 25%
  - Less than a high school diploma: 10%

- **On-call workers**
  - Bachelor's degree or higher: 34%
  - Some college or associate degree: 29%
  - High school graduates, no college: 27%
  - Less than a high school diploma: 11%

- **Temporary help agency workers**
  - Bachelor's degree or higher: 26%
  - Some college or associate degree: 26%
  - High school graduates, no college: 37%
  - Less than a high school diploma: 11%

- **Workers provided by contract firms**
  - Bachelor's degree or higher: 43%
  - Some college or associate degree: 25%
  - High school graduates, no college: 27%
  - Less than a high school diploma: 4%

- **Workers with traditional arrangements**
  - Bachelor's degree or higher: 41%
  - Some college or associate degree: 27%
  - High school graduates, no college: 25%
  - Less than a high school diploma: 7%

**Note:** Data may not sum to totals due to rounding.

**Source:** May 2017 Contingent Worker Supplement, Current Population Survey
Occupation of workers in alternative and traditional arrangements, May 2017

Note: Data may not sum to totals due to rounding.
Workers in alternative arrangements by their preference for a traditional work arrangement, May 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prefer alternative arrangement</th>
<th>Prefer traditional arrangement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent contractors</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-call workers</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary help agency</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data are not shown for those answering “It depends” or who did not respond. Workers provided by contract firms were not asked about their preference for a traditional arrangement.

Percent of workers in alternative and traditional arrangements with health insurance coverage, February 2005 and May 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent contractors</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-call workers</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary help agency workers</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers provided by contract firms</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers with traditional arrangements</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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Percent of workers in select alternative and traditional arrangements with employer-provided health insurance, February 2005 and May 2017

Note: Estimates for employer-provided health insurance were not tabulated for independent contractors.

Percent of workers in select alternative and traditional arrangements eligible for employer-provided pension or retirement plans, May 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible for employer-provided pension or retirement plan</th>
<th>Included in employer-provided pension or retirement plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-call workers</td>
<td>On-call workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary help agency workers</td>
<td>Temporary help agency workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers provided by contract firms</td>
<td>Workers provided by contract firms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers with traditional arrangements</td>
<td>Workers with traditional arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These data were not collected for independent contractors.
Median weekly earnings of full-time workers in alternative and traditional arrangements, May 2017

2017 dollars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Median Weekly Earnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent contractors</td>
<td>$851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-call workers</td>
<td>$797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary help agency workers</td>
<td>$521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers provided by contract firms</td>
<td>$1,077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers with traditional arrangements</td>
<td>$884</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 new questions

- Designed to identify people who found short tasks or jobs through a website or mobile app and were paid through same website or app

- These data will measure **electronically-mediated employment**, not necessarily the “gig economy”

- BLS evaluating data, results will be published at later date
Contact Information

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