

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 12, 2024

The Honorable Julie Su
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20210

The Honorable Shalanda Young
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Acting Secretary Su and Director Young,

We write to urge the Department of Labor (DOL) to include \$4 million to incorporate nonprofit workforce data into the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) as part of its Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 budget request.

The BLS's role as the only independent statistical agency that objectively and accurately measures labor market activity is crucial to informed policymaking and business decisions. Policymakers—along with economists, researchers, businesses, and jobseekers—rely heavily on the accuracy and independence of BLS data.¹ However, the BLS budget over the past decade has not kept up with inflation,² forcing the agency to cut key products and reducing the scope of others, such as the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW).³ The QCEW is an essential tool for policymakers and businesses across nearly every industry, covering nearly 95 percent of American jobs.⁴ Every quarter, it provides an accounting of employment and wages across the economy and catalogs data for specific sectors. QCEW-generated data provides industry leaders and public officials with vital information to make business and economic policy decisions.⁵

However, the QCEW reports do not disaggregate nonprofit workforce data, despite the roughly 10 percent of American workers—almost 17 percent in Massachusetts—who work for a nonprofit.⁶ Instead, BLS issues a separate nonprofit report roughly every five years, leaving nonprofit leaders and policymakers to make decisions with data that no longer reflect the reality of the economy. For example, nearly four years after the start of COVID-19 pandemic—which placed significant strain on nonprofits

¹ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “BLS Cuts Would Leave Policymakers Without Needed Data,” Isaac Shapiro, September 15, 2015, <https://www.cbpp.org/blog/bls-cuts-would-leave-policymakers-without-needed-data>.

² Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, Public Law 117-328; Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014, Public Law 113-76.

³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “2014 Budget Enacted for Bureau of Labor Statistics,” updated June 18, 2014, https://www.bls.gov/bls/budget2014_enacted.htm; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Green Jobs: Green Careers,” updated June 24, 2015, <https://www.bls.gov/green/greencareers.htm>.

⁴ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages,” <https://www.bls.gov/cew/overview.htm>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Independent Sector, “Nonprofit Economic Data,” <https://independentsector.org/policy/nonprofit-policy-issues/nonprofit-economic-data/>; Independent Sector, “State Profile – Massachusetts,” <https://independentsector.org/resource/state-profile-massachusetts/>.

providing critical medical and economic services to Americans across the country⁷—the BLS’s most recent nonprofit workforce data report dates from 2017.⁸

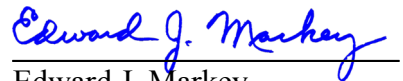
This lack of timely data presents a significant barrier to accurate and effective policymaking and sector planning. Thus, we urge you to include \$4 million in DOL’s upcoming budget request to add sector-specific nonprofit data to future quarterly QCEW reports.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

⁷ New York Times, “Providing a Pandemic Safety Net, Nonprofits Need Their Own,” Nicholas Kulish, July 24, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/24/business/economy/nonprofits-coronavirus-economy.html>.

⁸ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Research Data on the Nonprofit Sector,” <https://www.bls.gov/bdm/nonprofits/nonprofits.htm>.