

NHQI Data Readme

The Upjohn Institute's New Hires Quality Index (NHQI) tracks the earnings power of newly hired workers. By matching the occupations of newly hired workers to wages by occupation, the NHQI provides updates each month on the earnings power of new hires in the United States, in the aggregate and for different groups based on sex, age, education, and other characteristics. Please see http://www.upjohn.org/nhqi/reports/NHQI_press_current.pdf for the latest press release, and http://www.upjohn.org/nhqi/reports/NHQI_report.pdf for the technical report that explains methodology.

The downloadable database comes in two file formats, .csv file and an Excel file. The .csv file is intended for use in statistical software packages, such as R, SAS, SPSS, or Stata. The Excel file is formatted to be more user-friendly.

The data begin in January 2001 and run to the most recent month of data release. The NHQI has four components:

1. Wage index
2. Number of new hires
3. Wage bill
4. Hires per capita

The wage index captures the hourly earnings power of newly hired workers. The number of new hires captures hiring volume. The wage bill multiplies the wage index by the number of new hires; it captures the hourly earnings power of all new hires in a given month collectively. Hires per capita divides hiring volume by population to yield a hiring rate, the number of new hires per 1000 people.

Each of these components comes in two flavors. The first represents the data in levels: dollars per hour for the wage index, the number of newly hired workers, dollars earned by all new hires per hour, and hires per 1000 people. With the data in levels, it is easy to understand magnitudes but it is harder to examine relative changes over time. The second flavor represents the data relative to a base period, 2005. A value of 105, for example, indicates the series is 5 percent above its value in 2005; a value of 95 indicates the series is 5 percent below its value in 2005. When comparing different series, it is recommended to use the indexed version of the data.

In both the Excel and .csv files, the indexed version of the data is presented first, and the non-indexed version (data in levels) is presented below. The first set of columns makes up the wage index itself (component 1), columns that begin with "n_" make up the number of new hires (component 2), columns that begin with "wagebill_" make up the wage bill (component 3), and columns that begin with "cps_" make up hires per capita (component 4).

NOTE: With the release of the January 2018 NHQI, hires per capita are calculated differently than before. Now, hires per capita are available for all subgroups, with the population denominator

coming from the CPS (the same source as the number of new hires). Previously, hires per capita used population estimates from the Census Bureau, but these were not available for as many subgroups (hires per capita under this older method were contained in columns beginning with "poprat_". The current and old hires per capita series are not comparable, although the trends among both are quite similar.