

Introduction

The maps on the following pages display a wide variety of data about the American economy in the 1990s as a pattern of colors. For example, in the maps of joblessness in states and counties, the colors correspond to ranges of unemployment rates that remain constant across the years depicted. Progressively darker colors correspond to higher ranges of unemployment rates.

This representation permits two useful types of comparisons to be made:

- Data across states or counties can be compared at a given time
- Data for a given area or group of areas can be compared over time and over the business cycle

Similar comparisons may be made across states and counties for the rates of change in employment and annual wages. In these maps, the darker colors represent lower (or even negative) rates of change, while the lighter colors represent more expansive growth in jobs or pay.

One important limitation of this method of presenting data is that comparisons are confined to instances in which rates fall into different ranges. For example, it cannot be inferred from the maps whether the unemployment rate for Michigan increased, decreased, or remained constant between 1990 and

1991; the maps show only that unemployment rates were between 7.0 percent and 9.9 percent for each period.

Nor do the maps reveal whether the unemployment rate was greater in Iowa or Wisconsin in 1990; rates for both states were between 4.0 percent and 4.9 percent. On the other hand, it is clear that Michigan's unemployment rate dropped considerably between 1990 and 1999, and that the jobless rate in Wisconsin was higher than that of Iowa in 1994.

The section on mass layoff statistics takes a cross-sectional view of several dimensions of extended mass layoffs in 1999.

The maps of metropolitan areas depict occupational density and wages for selected occupations. Occupational density is an occupation's percentage share of employment in specific metropolitan areas. This is calculated by taking the Occupational Employment Statistics employment estimate for an occupation in a particular area and dividing it by the sum of all of the occupational employment estimates for that area.

Wages vary by occupation. There are geographic differences in wages for workers in the same occupation. The maps for wages by metropolitan area show the average wages earned in 1999 for 71 local areas. Average hourly earnings are presented for all workers and for those in seven selected occupations.

Business cycle turning points, 1949-99	
Peaks	Troughs
	October 1949
July 1953	
	May 1954
August 1957	
	April 1958
April 1960	
	February 1961
December 1969	
	November 1970
November 1973	
	March 1975
January 1980	
	July 1980
July 1981	
	November 1982
July 1990	
	March 1991