

Box

Alternative Measures of County Employment and Wages

Three widely used measures of annual county employment and wages by place of work are the Census Bureau's employment and payroll data in the County Business Patterns (CBP) series, the Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) employment and wage tabulations from the unemployment insurance (UI) program, and BEA's estimates of total wage and salary disbursements and employment.

The CBP data on employment and payrolls are an annual extension of the Census Bureau's quinquennial economic censuses; the data are derived from Federal administrative records and survey information of business establishments. The BLS data on county employment and wages are the product of the Federal-State Covered Employment and Wages, or ES-202, Program; the data are derived from tabulations of monthly employment and quarterly total wages of workers covered by state UI legislation and of Federal workers covered by the unemployment compensation for Federal employees (UCFE) program. BEA's estimates of total employment and total wage and salary disbursements are derived from the BLS data, which account for 95 percent of the wage and salary component of BEA's personal income estimates.

The coverage of the CBP data primarily differs from that of the BLS data because the CBP data exclude most government employees, and the BLS data cover civilian government employees (exhibit A).¹ The BLS data also include

¹ The CBP coverage of government employees is limited to those working in government hospitals, depository institutions, Federal and federally sponsored credit agencies, liquor stores, and wholesale liquor establishments.

some agricultural production employees and household employees that are excluded by the CBP data. However, the CBP coverage of the employees of educational and membership organizations and of small nonprofit organizations in other industries is more complete than the coverage of these employees in the BLS data. Beginning in 2001, employees of the American Indian Tribal Councils are included in the local government component by BLS and BEA. Prior to 2001, these employees were included in the relevant private industry components.² The CBP data continue to classify these employees in the relevant private industry components. Finally, CBP reports employment for the month of March, whereas the BLS employment data are an annual average of monthly data.

The BEA estimates of employment and wages differ from the BLS data because BEA makes adjustments to account for employment and wages not covered, or not fully covered, by the state UI and the UCFE programs. First, BEA adds estimates of employment and wages to the BLS data to bridge small gaps in UI coverage: For nonprofit organizations not participating in the UI program (several industries), for students and their spouses employed by public colleges or universities, for elected officials and members of the judiciary (state and local government), for interns employed by hospitals and by social service agencies, and for insurance agents classified as statutory employees (insurance agencies). Second, BEA uses additional source data to estimate most or all of the employment and wages for the following: Farms, farm labor contractors, private households, private elementary and secondary schools, religious

² For example, employees of casinos owned by tribal councils before 2001 were included in the Standard Industrial Classification services component "Amusement and Recreational Services."

membership organizations, railroads, military, and U.S. residents who are employed by international organizations and by foreign embassies and consulates in the United States. Third, BEA adjusts employment and wages for misreporting under the UI and UCFE programs.³

The Census Bureau released 2001 data on county total employment and payrolls on its Web site on April 10, 2003.⁴ BLS released 2001 annual county data on total employment and average annual pay on its Web site on November 21, 2002.⁵ BEA's released the 2001 estimates and the revised 1999–2000 estimates of total wage employment and total wage and salary disbursements on its Web site on December 30, 2002.⁶

³ For more information, see Local Area Personal Income, 1969–2000, available on BEA's Web site at <www.bea.gov>; under "Regional," select "Articles."

⁴ The data are available at <www.census.gov/epcd/cbp/view/cbpview.html>.

⁵ The data are available at <www.bls.gov/cew/>.

⁶ The data are available at <www.bea.gov/bea/regional/reis/>.