

Jobs Data Give Boost to Economic Development

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Innovative new products from the U.S. Census Bureau help jobseekers, employers and economic planners get an in-depth look at their local job market.

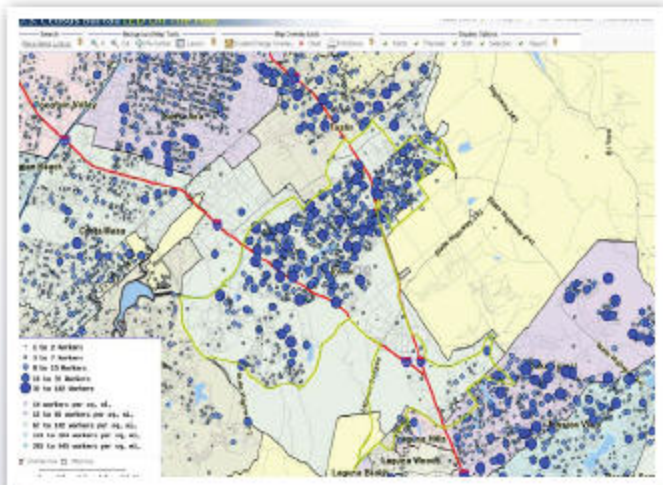
The Local Employment Dynamics (LED) partnership between state labor market information agencies and the Census Bureau came about to fill critical data gaps in workforce statistics at the state, county, metro and workforce investment area levels.

LED offers a trio of free online analytic tools to help decision-makers capture current workforce conditions and make economic development plans. These tools also can help employers find potential workers and show job seekers where to find the hot industries in their area. Starting a few years ago with 15 states, the program has grown to 44 states voluntarily participating in this program.

"For the first time, the federal government is working with state governments to deliver local labor force information and economic indicators," said Census Bureau Director Louis Kincannon.

The three LED online tools are: QWI (Quarterly Workforce Indicators) Online, Industry Focus and On the Map. QWI Online contains eight economic indicators: total employment, net job flows, job creation, number of new hires, separations, turnover and average monthly earnings for all workers, and new hires.

LED produces comparison tables by geography, time, gender, age or industry. Each indicator is a measure of a local economy that combines



The blue points show where those who work in Irvine, Calif., (outlined in yellow) reside.

wage information with demographic data. Together, they provide a complete picture of an area's workforce. Changes can be tracked over time.

Industry Focus allows users to: identify the leading industries for an area, focus on a particular industry to see how it ranks among top industries, and view graphs and charts of worker characteristics within industries. Users can analyze industries by state, county, workforce investment or metro area based on eight workforce indicators.

On the Map is a Web-based mapping tool showing where people live in relation to where they work with reports on age, earnings, industry distribution and local workforce indicators.

The On the Map tool is particularly innovative as it is the first partial synthetic data product released by the Census Bureau.

"The use of synthetic data is emerging as a viable approach to making analytically valid data available for public use without compromising

confidentiality," said Jeremy Wu, director of the LED program.

Administrators in private, educational and governmental organizations give the LED tools high marks.

"The power of the mapping capability just knocks your socks off," said Ray Uhalde of the National Center on Education and the Economy States.

Philip Rones, acting commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, describes the LED tools as "the Holy Grail of labor force data."

The Local Employment Dynamics data tools can be found at <www.census.gov> under Business & Industry.

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