

U.S. Census Bureau

LEHD's Older Worker Profile series is an innovative use of a unique new data source, which covers the employment history and characteristics of workers (including older workers) and the firms that employ them in the United States while their confidentiality is protected.

Lead Agency:

The U.S. Census Bureau

Agency Mission:

The Census Bureau serves as the leading source of quality data about the nation's people and economy. We honor privacy, protect confidentiality, share our expertise globally, and conduct our work openly. We are guided on this mission by our strong and capable workforce, our readiness to innovate, and our abiding commitment to our customers.

Principal Investigator:

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Partner Agencies:

Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor
National Institute on Aging (NIA), National Institute of Health

General Description:

The Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Program is in the process of producing a series of reports on Older Worker Profiles and associated tables by state.

To date, reports for 15 states have been issued, covering Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Montana, New Jersey, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Vermont, and Wisconsin. Reports for about 15 more states under the Local Employment Dynamics (LED) partnership will be released in the coming months.

Drawing on the unique collection of databases developed by LEHD, the Older Worker Profiles highlight the age composition of the state's workforce, job gains and losses for older workers by industry, industries in which older workers are concentrated, and their job stability and earnings.

In addition, forty-two (42) different supplementary and appendix tables are provided for additional details. These reports and tables are made available from the LEHD website located at <<http://lehd.did.census.gov>>.

The unique collection of databases developed by LEHD is also known as a job frame, designed to cover the employment history and characteristics of every worker in the United States and the employment history and characteristics of every job-linked employer in the nation.

The job frame is created by integrating historical and current data from state agencies, the Census Bureau, and sister federal agencies. It currently contains over 6 billion records and is growing with new records of recent data every 90 days.

Additional products have been derived from this job frame for older workers, including:

- **OnTheMap.** An interactive mapping and reporting application that shows where people live and work with companion reports on age, earnings, industry, and cross-state patterns of residence and workplace. OnTheMap also allows for mapping and reporting for older workers only.
- **Quarterly Workforce Indicators.** A set of 30 indicators that describe the dynamics of local employment, earnings, turnover, and job changes by geography, gender, industry and time in year and quarter for all workers and older workers only.

Excellence: What makes this project exceptional?

The Older Worker Profiles produced by LEHD are exceptional because they provide unique and valuable information on the labor market outcomes for the aging population that are useful for both research and policy evaluation. Each Older Worker Profile, which consists of a report and a series of supplementary and appendix tables for a single state, identify key features of the local (to the Metropolitan and County areas) employment dynamics for older workers. Because the underlying microdata is tagged with a number of socioeconomic variables (including age and industry), detailed answers about local labor market conditions can be reported.

Specifically, the Older Worker Profile expose lay audiences to a new set of statistics called Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWIs). These data describe – at quarterly intervals with a historical sequence back to 1990 for some states – various statistical aspects of local labor markets, including but not limited to: Employment, New Hires, Job Separations, Turnover, and Average Earnings. QWIs for Older Workers in the report portion of the Profile are available at the 2-digit NAICS industry sector level and in the downloadable tables at the 3-digit NAICS industry subsector level. Using the QWI, the Older Worker Profiles generate information on the types of jobs that older workers are leaving and being hired.

Additionally, the Older Worker Profiles are exceptional because they are only the tip of the iceberg with respect to the data source from which they were extracted. The LEHD data infrastructure provides opportunities for a comprehensive and longitudinal analysis of older workers across the nation and down to the county level. Extensions of this research are expected to bring further detail to the database through the addition of external data sources and the application more advance confidentiality protection systems, which should allow greater geographic/characteristic detail while maintaining strict confidentiality protection and increasing analytical validity.

Significance: How is this research relevant to older persons, populations and/or an aging society?

The research on Older Workers goes right to the heart of questions of the economic health of the United States in the coming decades. As older workers – specifically of the aging Baby Boom generation – move through the traditional retirement age, outcomes of their employment opportunities and choices will have significant impacts on policy choices and options at every level of government and private industry. Whether or not older workers choose to move directly to retirement, continue to work full time, or move into semi-retirement; which jobs older works choose or are forced into holding because of their economic resources; and whether or not older workers continue to be compensated for their experience are all questions whose answers will have important consequences for the national and local economies. These are all questions that can be illuminated by the data and research that underlie LEHD’s Older Worker Profile series.

Effectiveness: What is the impact and/or application of this research to older persons?

The primary impact of this research is to lead the way in making use of a unique dataset for the purposes of evaluating the consequences of an important change coming in the workforce as the Baby Boom generation moves through the traditional retirement age. This research and these data can guide programs and policy to address the needs of and support older workers who continue to participate in the workforce. In addition, the dataset provides the ability to answer questions about potential gaps in knowledge as a large cohort of experienced workers faces retirement. What are the industries in which there will most likely be knowledge/experience gaps? In which industries will older workers continue on through retirement, reaping the rewards of their long experience? In

which industries will we expect to find those older Americans who did not plan adequately for retirement and how will their compensation compare with their younger colleagues? The research being done and the research to come on Older Workers will have a significant impact on how these questions are interpreted and how they are answered by economic and labor force policy at all levels.

Innovativeness: Why is this research exciting or newsworthy?

The Older Worker Profiles are exciting and newsworthy because they report on a much-needed dataset at exactly the right time. As communities see their labor forces age and retire, local, regional, state, and national leaders are looking for information to help them understand how to respond. At the same time, business and industry want to know how many jobs they will need to fill in the coming years. These reports begin the process of uncovering the answers to these questions.

This research is also exciting and newsworthy because it makes use of a relatively new dataset that has the opportunity to open up whole new lines of research into the labor force dynamics of older workers. The Older Worker Profiles (reports and supplementary tables) report on public-use data that has been cleared by the Census Bureau's Disclosure Review Board. These data are available in a number of extended forms (the Older Worker Profiles are merely one slice of it) that extend the information on the QWIs as well as show more detailed geographical distributions of the data. Additionally, a rich series of confidential microdata is available through approved research projects, and the possibilities for this research are almost limitless.