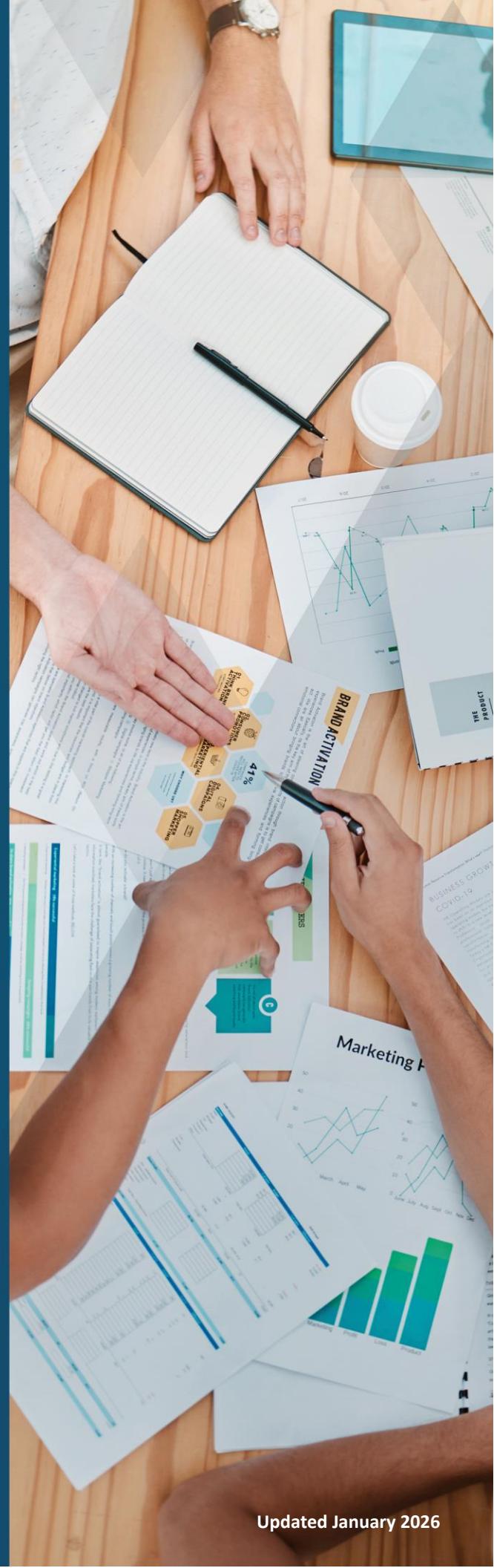




NC DEPARTMENT  
of COMMERCE  
LABOR & ECONOMIC  
ANALYSIS

# DATA & INFORMATION SOURCEBOOK

LEAD's Guide to Economic,  
Workforce & Community  
Development Research  
Resources



# About the Research Manual

The Labor and Economic Analysis Division (LEAD) created the Research Manual to help our partners make data search more efficient. While the Manual covers a variety of popular data categories as indicated in the Table of Contents, it does not represent an exhaustive list. It is possible to assign data into different categories; for example, wage rates can be labeled under Business & Industry or Workforce, an A-Z Index in the back of this Manual helps sort every category and topic alphabetically.

The Research Manual includes the following data categories:

- **Business & Industry:** company directories, general industry data, and specific industry data
- **Economic:** regional economic conditions, gross state product, income, and inflation
- **Energy & Utilities:** energy, electricity, and natural gas prices
- **Housing & Construction:** housing permits, construction activity, and sales activity
- **International:** country profiles, foreign direct investment, and international trade
- **Social:** education, crime, population, demographics, and poverty
- **State Government & Policy:** taxes, incentives, and licensing/permit requirements
- **Transportation:** air travel and commuting patterns
- **Workforce:** wages, unemployment rates, and union activity

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# LEAD's Most Requested Data

1. **LEAD's D4 (Demand Driven Data Delivery System):** D4 is a great resource for finding North Carolina focused employment and industry data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics programs. D4 provides access to multiple data programs:   
Website: [d4.ncommerce.com](http://d4.ncommerce.com)
  - **LAUS (Local Area Unemployment Statistics):** Create customized data sets for unemployment data at the state, county, and sub-county levels. Select geography, year, and time periods to view or download unemployment rates and labor force data.  
Website: [d4.ncommerce.com/LausSelection.aspx](http://d4.ncommerce.com/LausSelection.aspx)
  - **QCEW (Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages):** The best source for wages by industry and by region. Access employment, establishment counts, and wage data by geography (State, County, MSA, WDB or Prosperity Zone).  
Website: [d4.ncommerce.com/QCEWSelection.aspx](http://d4.ncommerce.com/QCEWSelection.aspx)
  - **OEWS (Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics):** The best source for occupational wages by industry and by State/MSA. Access wage data by occupation and geography.  
Website: [d4.ncommerce.com/OESSelection.aspx](http://d4.ncommerce.com/OESSelection.aspx)
  - **Business Search:** Search mechanism to find companies based on name, location, and NAICS code.  
Website: [accessnc.ncommerce.com/business](http://accessnc.ncommerce.com/business)
  - **Area Profiles (Demographics):** Generate comprehensive demographic reports by area type and geography including retail sales data.  
Website: [accessnc.ncommerce.com/DemographicsReports](http://accessnc.ncommerce.com/DemographicsReports)
2. **LEAD Analytics (Tableau Dashboards):** LEAD provides various interactive dashboards and tools across North Carolina:   
Website: [analytics.ncommerce.com](http://analytics.ncommerce.com)
  - **NC Today:** Monthly releases with simple snapshots of state and local unemployment rates and quick economic overviews on employment and labor force  
Website: [analytics.ncommerce.com/NC-Today](http://analytics.ncommerce.com/NC-Today)
  - **Regional Labor Market Overviews:** Labor market overviews by Workforce Development Board  
Website: [analytics.ncommerce.com/Regional-Labor-Market-Overviews](http://analytics.ncommerce.com/Regional-Labor-Market-Overviews)
  - **Occupational Wage Lookup Dashboard:** Interactive tool to search occupational wage data by common job titles and geographic areas, displaying employment levels, wage percentiles (10th, 25th, median, 75th, 90th), and industry distribution  
Website: [analytics.ncommerce.com/Occupational-Wage-Lookup](http://analytics.ncommerce.com/Occupational-Wage-Lookup)
  - **NC Labor Supply and Demand:** Trends on jobseekers, job openings and labor market tightness  
Website: [analytics.ncommerce.com/NC-Labor-Supply-Demand](http://analytics.ncommerce.com/NC-Labor-Supply-Demand)
  - **Unemployment Insurance Claims Dashboard:** UI claims and claimant information by geography and demographics  
Website: [analytics.ncommerce.com/NC-UI-Claims](http://analytics.ncommerce.com/NC-UI-Claims)

- **Area Profiles Dashboard:** Comprehensive economic and demographic overviews for North Carolina's counties, metros, and regions  
Website: [analytics.nccommerce.com/Area-Profiles](http://analytics.nccommerce.com/Area-Profiles)
- **Commuting Patterns Dashboard:** Visualizes worker commuting flows showing relationships between where people live and work  
Website: [analytics.nccommerce.com/Commuting-Patterns](http://analytics.nccommerce.com/Commuting-Patterns)
- **Demographic Insights Dashboard:** Demographic and economic data by racial groups  
Website: [analytics.nccommerce.com/Demographic-Insights](http://analytics.nccommerce.com/Demographic-Insights)
- **NC Workforce Development Boards Service Delivery Outcomes:** Performance metrics for workforce services  
Website: [analytics.nccommerce.com/NC-WDB-Services](http://analytics.nccommerce.com/NC-WDB-Services)
- **WARN Reports Dashboard:** Layoff and closure data  
Website: [commerce.nc.gov/data-tools-reports/labor-market-data-tools/workforce-warn-reports/data-dashboard-workforce-warn-reports](http://commerce.nc.gov/data-tools-reports/labor-market-data-tools/workforce-warn-reports/data-dashboard-workforce-warn-reports)
- **Additional Dashboards:** NC Works Commission Newsletter, NC RORS (Reentry Outcome Reporting System), Business Pulse Survey, Employer Needs Survey

3. **NCcareers.org:** LEAD's comprehensive career exploration and workforce development platform providing occupational information, wages, training resources, and career assessment tools.   
Website: [nccareers.org](http://nccareers.org)

4. **The LEAD Feed:** LEAD's official blog featuring research articles, economic analysis, data explainers, and insights on North Carolina's labor market trends, workforce issues, economic indicators, unemployment statistics, and industry conditions written by LEAD economists and analysts.   
Website: [commerce.nc.gov/news/the-lead-feed](http://commerce.nc.gov/news/the-lead-feed)

5. **NC Commerce Newsletter Subscription Center:** Centralized access to subscribe to department newsletters including SYNC (economic development news for local government and private-sector partners), NC's Economy in Numbers (monthly state economic data and insights), and LEADING News (monthly county unemployment rates and LEAD product updates).   
Website: [commerce.nc.gov/news/newsletter-subscription-center](http://commerce.nc.gov/news/newsletter-subscription-center)

6. **NC Commerce Reports:** LEAD produces employment projections (long-term 10-year industry and occupational employment projections), incentive program reports, and other workforce and economic reports.   
Website: [nccommerce.com/data-tools-reports/labor-market-data-tools](http://nccommerce.com/data-tools-reports/labor-market-data-tools)

7. **EDPNC's Zoom Prospector Tool:** EDPNC provides an online database that analyzes the state, cities, counties and regions with robust demographic, labor force, consumer expenditure, wages, business, talent and foreign direct investment data.  
Website: [properties.zoomprospector.com/northcarolina/community](http://properties.zoomprospector.com/northcarolina/community)

8. **NC Department of Revenue – Tax Rates:** The NC Department of Revenue provides property and sales tax information on its website.  
Website (Property Tax): [ncdor.gov/taxes-forms/property-tax/property-tax-rates](http://ncdor.gov/taxes-forms/property-tax/property-tax-rates)  
Website (Sales Tax): [ncdor.gov/taxes-forms/sales-and-use-tax/sales-and-use-tax-rates/current-sales-and-use-tax-rates](http://ncdor.gov/taxes-forms/sales-and-use-tax/sales-and-use-tax-rates/current-sales-and-use-tax-rates)
9. **Cross-State Tax Comparisons:** For comparing North Carolina to other states' tax rates:
  - **Federation of Tax Administrators:** Provides corporate, franchise, sales and income rates for all states  
Website: [taxadmin.org/tax-rates-new](http://taxadmin.org/tax-rates-new)
  - **Tax Foundation:** Provides a variety of resources and reports on cross-state comparisons of tax rates  
Website: [taxfoundation.org/research/state-tax](http://taxfoundation.org/research/state-tax)
  - **Council on State Taxation:** Produces an annual report (with Ernst & Young) on tax burdens across states  
Website: [cost.org/state-tax-resources/cost-studies-articles-and-reports](http://cost.org/state-tax-resources/cost-studies-articles-and-reports)
10. **U.S. Census Bureau – Explore Census Data:** The Census Bureau provides quality data about the nation's people and economy. The Explore Census Data platform provides tables on multiple geographies and topics as well as data profiles, maps, visualizations and industry data.  
Website: [data.census.gov/cedsci](http://data.census.gov/cedsci)
11. **Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS):** While D4 is very helpful for pulling North Carolina-focused economic and workforce data, the BLS website can be used to compare North Carolina to other states and access national data.  
Website: [bls.gov](http://bls.gov)
12. **Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA):** The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) is a federal agency that produces key economic statistics like GDP, income, and trade data for the United States and its regions. Its data are widely used by policymakers, businesses, and researchers to track economic performance and make decisions  
Website: [bea.gov/data](http://bea.gov/data)
13. **St. Louis Federal Reserve's FRED:** FRED is a good option for finding and collecting economic data—many economists use it as their "go-to" source. FRED aggregates data from many different sources. Much of its data have more of a national and international focus, but it does aggregate state-level data too.  
Website (Homepage): [research.stlouisfed.org/fred2](http://research.stlouisfed.org/fred2)  
Website (NC Series): [research.stlouisfed.org/fred2/categories/27315](http://research.stlouisfed.org/fred2/categories/27315)
14. **Data USA:** Deloitte and Datawheel provide data through advanced data analytics and visualization from multiple data sources. Conduct your own analyses about people, places, industries, skill sets and educational institutions.  
Website: [datausa.io](http://datausa.io)

15. **NC Department of Commerce GIS/Maps Portal:** Provides downloadable geographic data layers, interactive maps, and GIS applications including workforce development board boundaries, metropolitan statistical areas, prosperity zones, county tiers, business location maps, and other economic development geographic resources.

Website: [data-nccommerce.opendata.arcgis.com](http://data-nccommerce.opendata.arcgis.com)

16. **Opportunity Insights (Covid Recovery Tracking):** The Economic Tracker tracks the economic impacts of COVID-19 on people, businesses, and communities across the United States.

Website: [economictracker.org](http://economictracker.org)

## Business & Industry

There are many sources of data, research, and support services related to business and industry. Below is just a snapshot of some of the resources LEAD staff uses on a regular basis.

- Company Lists and Directories
- Company Briefs, Reports, and Filings
- Industry Data (General)
- Industry Data (Specific Industries)
- Other Business Data
- Small Business

### COMPANY LISTS AND DIRECTORIES

While there are various sources for company lists and directories, some of the information is not always credible. Since third-party data providers use different methodologies for data collection, the results of company search can be varied. Below are some options:

#### BUSINESS SEARCH (D4)

The D4 Dashboard provides a good search mechanism to find companies based on name, location, and other criteria. [FAQ](#)

- Click [Other Tools](#) on D4 Homepage Navigation Bar
- Select “Business Search”
- Choose “NC Quick Search” or “Advanced Search” to search companies by 4-digit NAICS

Website: [accessnc.nccommerce.com/business](http://accessnc.nccommerce.com/business)

#### BUSINESS SEARCH (DATA-AXLE REFERENCE SOLUTIONS VIA NC LIVE)

Data-Axle Reference Solutions from NCLive.org provides easy access to in-depth information on U.S. businesses. To access the site, a library card from a participating NCLive partner is required (e.g. through the State Library).

- Go to [NCLive.org](#)
- Click “Resources” on the Menu Bar
- Select “Browse All Databases”
- Choose “Business & Management” under Subjects
- Scroll down the page to find “Data-Axle Reference Solutions”
- Select your participating library and enter your ID number

Website: [nclive.org/browse](http://nclive.org/browse)

## LARGEST EMPLOYERS (BY COUNTY AND STATE)

LEAD provides the Top 25 Employers by manufacturing and nonmanufacturing employers as well as by county. [LEAD](#)

Website: [d4.nccommerce.com/QCEWLargestEmployers](http://d4.nccommerce.com/QCEWLargestEmployers)

For the largest statewide (principal) employers, the Office of the State Controller provides a list in its **Annual Comprehensive Financial Report**. Select the most recent report and do a search for the list (Table 16).

Website: [osc.nc.gov](http://osc.nc.gov)

## COMPANY BRIEFS, REPORTS AND FILINGS

### ANNUAL REPORTS

A company's annual report is usually available on its company website; if this doesn't work, here are some options:

The Investor Network allows you to search by company name or industry for corporate annual reports. Hard copies of reports can be delivered by mail or email.

Website: [orderannualreports.com](http://orderannualreports.com)

AnnualReports.com also provides company annual reports (and 10Ks report if available) online or select companies to order hard copy reports.

Website: [annualreports.com](http://annualreports.com)

### COMPANY PROFILES

There are many different options for finding company information via paid subscriptions. However, you can search the company online and may find some free options such as NCLive (a library card is required).

- Go to [NCLive Browse Resource page](#)
- Select Letter "B" to find "Business Market Research Collection"
- Select the participating library and your ID number
- Navigate or search for the company

Website: [nclive.org/resource/business-market-research-collection](http://nclive.org/resource/business-market-research-collection)

## SECURITIES FILINGS - SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION (SEC)

All public companies, foreign and domestic, are required to file registration statements, periodic reports, and other forms electronically through the SEC's EDGAR filing management system. Below is the link for instructions on searching the EDGAR database and a complete list of filings.

Website: [sec.gov/edgar](http://sec.gov/edgar)

Note: Generally, the most informative filing is the 10-K, a company's annual filing which gives a comprehensive review of the company's financial performance. While sometimes a company's 10-K is similar to its "glossy" annual report (listed above), it is not the same, so when doing company research, it's best to look at both the Annual Report and the 10-K.

## STATE CORPORATE FILINGS

The North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State's Business Registration Division's website provides information on [launching a North Carolina business](#). Forms, fee schedules, and instructions on incorporation are available for printing at this [site](#). This site also provides a search feature to find information and filings related to North Carolina business entities. The department's number is 919-814-5400.

Website: [sosnc.gov/online\\_services/search/by\\_title/\\_Business\\_Registration\\_Changes](http://sosnc.gov/online_services/search/by_title/_Business_Registration_Changes)

## **BUSINESS & INDUSTRY DATA (GENERAL)**

### **ANNUAL SURVEY OF MANUFACTURERS (U.S. CENSUS BUREAU)**

The Annual Survey of Manufacturers provides detailed data about the manufacturing industry including employees, payroll, inputs, and production for manufacturing industry (NAICS codes 31-33). The survey provides state-level data, along with national data.

Website: [census.gov/programs-surveys](http://census.gov/programs-surveys)

### **BUSINESS STATISTICS**

The Business Formation Statistics (BFS) are a standard data product of the U.S. Census Bureau. The BFS provides timely and high frequency information on new business applications and formations in the U.S.

Website: [census.gov/econ/bfs/index](http://census.gov/econ/bfs/index)

### **BUSINESS SURVEYS**

The Small Business Pulse Survey (SBPS) measures the effect of changing business conditions during the Coronavirus pandemic on our nation's small businesses. It has also proven valuable in measuring the impact of other major events such as hurricanes on our nation's small businesses.

Website: [portal.census.gov/pulse/data](http://portal.census.gov/pulse/data)

The Employer Needs Survey Dashboard presents findings from LEAD's biennial survey of North Carolina employers, displaying data on hiring difficulties, recruitment challenges, workforce skill gaps, barriers to employment, training needs, and compensation trends by industry sector. The Employer Needs Survey Report is an accompanying comprehensive PDF publication. [LEAD](#)

Website: [analytics.nccommerce.com/Employer-Needs-Survey](http://analytics.nccommerce.com/Employer-Needs-Survey)

Website: [analytics.nccommerce.com/Employer-Needs-Survey/PDF](http://analytics.nccommerce.com/Employer-Needs-Survey/PDF)

NC TECH's quarterly Leadership Polls survey several hundred North Carolina tech executives on business conditions, hiring trends, and key concerns in the state's tech sector. Results are shared in live webinar briefings, with recordings and slide decks archived online.

Website: [nctech.org/resources/nc-tech-pulse.html](http://nctech.org/resources/nc-tech-pulse.html)

The North Carolina Business Pulse Survey Dashboard displays monthly survey results from North Carolina businesses on current business conditions, revenue performance, staffing levels, capital access challenges, and business concerns by industry sector. (Note: Survey was discontinued in July 2023; dashboard contains historical data.) [LEAD](#)

Website: [analytics.nccommerce.com/Pulse-Survey](http://analytics.nccommerce.com/Pulse-Survey)

### **CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS (CES)**

The BLS' CES program provides monthly estimates of employment, hours, and earnings for the Nation, State, and Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA). Information is from a monthly survey of employers from collecting data from payroll records of business establishments. CES data can be accessed via D4 link below:

[LEAD](#)

Website: [d4.nccommerce.com/CesSelection](http://d4.nccommerce.com/CesSelection)

### **ECONOMIC CENSUS (U.S. CENSUS BUREAU)**

The Economic Census is the U.S. Government's official five-year measure of American business and the economy. It is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, and response is required by law. These reports serve as a major source of facts about the structure and functioning of the nation's economy.

Website: [census.gov/EconomicCensus](http://census.gov/EconomicCensus)

## INDUSTRY CLASSIFICATION (NORTH AMERICAN INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM – NAICS)

One of the most important parts of any industry research is determining how industries are classified. Most industry data are now organized by NAICS code, although some sources still use Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes. NAICS codes searches are available through the Census Bureau.

Website: [census.gov/naics](https://www.census.gov/naics)

## INNOVATION & PATENTS

PatentsView is the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's comprehensive patent database providing 40+ years of searchable patent data, including inventor locations, assignee organizations, technology classifications, and geographic innovation patterns that enable tracking North Carolina's innovation output by technology sector and benchmarking against competitor states.

Website: [patentsview.org/home](https://www.patentsview.org/home)

## QUARTERLY CENSUS OF EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES (QCEW)

QCEW can be a good place to start if you're looking for general data on the number of establishments or employees in a region broken out by industry. QCEW can be accessed via the D4 link below: 

Website: [d4.nccommerce.com/QCEWSelection](https://d4.nccommerce.com/QCEWSelection)

QCEW data is also available for other states and nationally via the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics:

Website: [bls.gov/cew](https://bls.gov/cew)

## INDUSTRY DATA (SPECIFIC INDUSTRIES)

### INDUSTRY REPORTS (EDPNC)

The Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC) provides industry reports via the link below:

Website: [edpnc.com/industries](https://edpnc.com/industries)

The NC TECH Association publishes an annual State of the Technology Industry Report that tracks employment, wages, and trends in North Carolina's technology sector.

Website: [nctech.org/resources/research.html](https://nctech.org/resources/research.html)

The North Carolina Motorsports Association provides data highlighting the state's motorsports industry, including its economic impact, employment, and concentration of teams, tracks, businesses, and educational institutions.

Website: [northcarolinamotorsportsassociation.org/about-ncma/north-carolina-motorsports-facts](https://northcarolinamotorsportsassociation.org/about-ncma/north-carolina-motorsports-facts)

### INDUSTRY PROFILES (DUKE UNIVERSITY)

Duke University's "North Carolina in the Global Economy" produces detailed information and reports on seven of the top industries in North Carolina. Please note that these reports are dated, but some of the historical information can still be helpful and relevant.

Website: [soc.duke.edu/NC\\_GlobalEconomy/index](https://soc.duke.edu/NC_GlobalEconomy/index)

## AGRICULTURE

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services provides a variety of resources regarding the agricultural industry in North Carolina. Check out its comprehensive Annual Statistics Book.

Website: [ncagr.gov/divisions/agricultural-statistics/agricultural-statistics-annual-statistics-book-highlights-brochure](http://ncagr.gov/divisions/agricultural-statistics/agricultural-statistics-annual-statistics-book-highlights-brochure)

## BANKS

Banking regulation is complicated and finding data on the banking industry can be complicated. Here are some options:

The North Carolina Commissioner of Banks regulates state-chartered banks. It provides a variety of research and reports on banking in the state.

Website: [nccob.gov/Public/News/NRPubAndResearch](http://nccob.gov/Public/News/NRPubAndResearch)

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) is one of the major national bank regulators. It provides detailed statistics on FDIC-regulated depository institutions by state.

Website: [fdic.gov/bank/statistical](http://fdic.gov/bank/statistical)

The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) is another major bank regulator and provides useful data and research reports.

Website: [occ.gov/publications-and-resources/index-publications-and-resources](http://occ.gov/publications-and-resources/index-publications-and-resources)

## BIOTECHNOLOGY

The North Carolina Biotechnology Center has a variety of resources and information on the biotech industry in the state. See link below to its research library:

Website: [ncbiotech.org/resource-library](http://ncbiotech.org/resource-library)

## CHILDCARE

The North Carolina Task Force on Child Care and Early Education produces reports analyzing access, affordability, workforce challenges, and the economic impacts of child care across the state.

Website: [commerce.nc.gov/reports-policymakers/other-reports/report-nc-task-force-child-care-early-education-june-2025/open](http://commerce.nc.gov/reports-policymakers/other-reports/report-nc-task-force-child-care-early-education-june-2025/open)

## MILITARY

While not an “industry” in the narrow sense of the word, the military certainly has an enormous economic impact on the nation and the state.

The North Carolina Military Business Center’s (NCMBC) primary goal is to help existing businesses identify, bid on and win military and other federal contracts. The NCMBC maintains a searchable, historical database of transitioning military personnel to help economic developers quantify this potential workforce for businesses locating in North Carolina. The NCMBC conducted a strategic Gap Analysis study to identify strategic priorities, target lucrative defense industry sectors, and identify specific target companies for economic developers to recruit and locate in North Carolina.

Website: [ncmbc.us](http://ncmbc.us)

MatchForce links businesses to government contracts, government purchasers to North Carolina suppliers, and job seekers to North Carolina jobs. Businesses, contracting officers, cardholders, and job seekers can register, post, search and receive opportunities.

Website: [matchforce.org](http://matchforce.org)

The U.S. Department of Defense provided a quick-reference listing of the top DOD sites with direct access to the databases of all registered DOD sites

Website: [dod.defense.gov/About/Military-Departments/DoD-Websites](http://dod.defense.gov/About/Military-Departments/DoD-Websites)

## MILITARY & GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING

While it includes more than just military contracting, USASpending.gov provides a variety of tools to search for the DOD and other federal contracting opportunities, along with historical data. Start at the search/data page:

Website: [usaspending.gov](http://usaspending.gov)

## TRAVEL & TOURISM

Visit North Carolina, a unit of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, provides various measures of the tourism industry in North Carolina.

Website: [partners.visitnc.com/research](http://partners.visitnc.com/research)

Visit North Carolina also offers tourism data by county and by year:

Website: [visitnc.com/industry/research/economic-impact-studies](http://visitnc.com/industry/research/economic-impact-studies)

## SMALL BUSINESS

### SMALL BUSINESS (GENERAL)

The Small Business Technology Development Center provides a variety of resources and data for small business owners, and its research staff is very helpful answering any questions about small business. They can be reached at 800-258-0862 or locally at 919-715-7272.

Website: [sbtdc.org/services/research](http://sbtdc.org/services/research)

The federal Small Business Administration (SBA) provides data on business size and dynamics at the national and state levels:

Website: [advocacy.sba.gov/2019/08/29/small-business-facts-establishment-dynamics](http://advocacy.sba.gov/2019/08/29/small-business-facts-establishment-dynamics)

SBA provides small business profiles for the states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S.

Website: [advocacy.sba.gov/category/research/state-profiles](http://advocacy.sba.gov/category/research/state-profiles)

SBA also provides a useful guide for those starting, managing, and growing a small business:

Website: [sba.gov/business-guide](http://sba.gov/business-guide)

### SBIR/STTR AWARDS

The Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (SBTT) grants are highly competitive grants focused on small business R&D. Data on past awards by state and by company can be found at the website below:

Website: [sbir.gov/awards](http://sbir.gov/awards)

### VENTURE CAPITAL

PricewaterhouseCoopers and the National Venture Capital Association provide quarterly data on the US venture capital investment activity by state.

Website: [pwc.com/us/en/industries/technology/moneytree/explorer](http://pwc.com/us/en/industries/technology/moneytree/explorer)

## OTHER BUSINESS DATA

### LICENSING (REQUIREMENTS FOR BUSINESSES)

EDPNC's Business Support link contains information on licensing and regulations questions. You can also search the North Carolina Business and Occupational License Database ([NC BOLD](#)) for additional information. Business advisors from EDPNC are available at 1-800-228-8443.

Website: [edpnc.com/start-or-grow-a-business/start-a-business](http://edpnc.com/start-or-grow-a-business/start-a-business)

## NEW BUSINESS STARTS AND FAILURES (BUSINESS DYNAMICS)

The U.S. Census Bureau provides a variety of data on businesses by State, County and MSA, including data related to new business starts and failures through the Business Dynamics Statistics Explorer tool.

Website: [bds.explorer.ces.census.gov](http://bds.explorer.ces.census.gov)

Note: This website contains a lot of data sets and can be a bit overwhelming. For the state level (and county and MSA) data, look for the “State, MSA & County dynamic data” under “Statistics of U.S. Businesses.” Also, “State Data” under Business Dynamics Statistics” might be helpful.

## WORKER SAFETY (OSHA)

The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) provides several options for data related to its inspections and accident investigations.

Website: [osha.gov/oshstats](http://osha.gov/oshstats)

The North Carolina Department of Labor has the Consultative Services Bureau that provides free, confidential consultative services to companies who need instruction or improvement in their OSHA compliance activities. This service is available to private companies with 500 or fewer employees nationwide.

Website: [nclabor.com/osha/consult/consult](http://nclabor.com/osha/consult/consult)

## ECONOMIC RANKINGS

CNBC’s “America’s Top States for Business” is an annual study that compares how competitive each state is for companies using data on workforce, infrastructure, costs, economy, and quality of life.

Website: [cnbc.com/top-states-past-year-rankings](http://cnbc.com/top-states-past-year-rankings)

Business Facilities magazine’s “Best Business Climate” ranking highlights states that offer strong conditions for corporate investment and job creation, considering factors like taxes, regulations, infrastructure, and workforce.

Website: [businessfacilities.com/2025-state-rankings-21st-annual-rankings-report](http://businessfacilities.com/2025-state-rankings-21st-annual-rankings-report)

Site Selection magazine’s state business climate ranking blends corporate executive surveys with actual project and investment data to rate how attractive states are for new and expanding facilities.

Website: [siteselection.com/2026-workforce-development-rankings-bright-horizons](http://siteselection.com/2026-workforce-development-rankings-bright-horizons)

The Tax Foundation’s State Business Tax Climate Index evaluates how competitively each state structures its major taxes, focusing on tax design and simplicity rather than the amount of revenue collected.

Website: [taxfoundation.org/research/all/state/2026-state-tax-competitiveness-index](http://taxfoundation.org/research/all/state/2026-state-tax-competitiveness-index)

# Economic Information

This is the “catch-all” category for data and resources related to economics, workforce, and industry.

## GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT

Gross domestic product is the total value of all final goods and services produced in the state and is often used as a gauge of economic health. GDP is produced by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and is also available for select metropolitan statistical areas.

Website: [bea.gov/data/gdp/gdp-state](http://bea.gov/data/gdp/gdp-state)

## PRICES - CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (CPI)

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) produces the Consumer Price Index (CPI) which measures changes in prices of consumer goods and services. It is one of the key measures of inflation.

Website: [bls.gov/cpi/home](http://bls.gov/cpi/home)

Historical Data: [bls.gov/cpi/tables/home](http://bls.gov/cpi/tables/home)  
Website: [fred.stlouisfed.org/series/CPIAUCSL](http://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/CPIAUCSL)

## PRICES - PRODUCER PRICE INDEX (PPI)

The BLS also produces the Producer Price Index to track prices at a wholesale or producer level. PPI is only available at the national level.

Website: [bls.gov/ppi](http://bls.gov/ppi)

## PRICES - COST OF LIVING CALCULATORS

There are many different cost of living calculators available online. Sperling's Best Places provides a simple and easy-to-use comparison tool. The comparison tool also breaks down the difference by category, including food, housing, utilities, transportation, and health cost of living numbers.

Website: [bestplaces.net/cost-of-living](http://bestplaces.net/cost-of-living)

Website: [livingwage.mit.edu/states/37/locations](http://livingwage.mit.edu/states/37/locations)

## PRICES - INFLATION CALCULATORS

The U.S. Inflation Calculator provides current and historical monthly Consumer Price Index (CPI-U) data back to 1913.

Website: [usinflationcalculator.com/inflation](http://usinflationcalculator.com/inflation)

## REGIONAL BUSINESS CONDITIONS

The Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond provides research and data covering economic issues affecting North Carolina and surrounding states. The Bank produces monthly snapshots of business conditions in North Carolina, plus regional surveys of business activity in the Carolinas. The regional surveys generates information on business employment and wages trends as well as manufacturing activity of employment, wages, shipments, local business conditions, etc.

Website (Snapshots): [richmondfed.org/research/regional\\_economy/reports/snapshot](http://richmondfed.org/research/regional_economy/reports/snapshot)

Website (Surveys of Business Activity/Manufacturing Activity/Economic Conditions):  
[richmondfed.org/region\\_communities/regional\\_data\\_analysis/business\\_surveys](http://richmondfed.org/region_communities/regional_data_analysis/business_surveys)

In connection with the above, several times a year, the Federal Reserve Banks consolidate their views on the state of the economy in each bank region in what is known as the Beige Book, which can be a useful data source for regional economic conditions around the country.

Website: [federalreserve.gov/monetarypolicy/beige-book-default](http://federalreserve.gov/monetarypolicy/beige-book-default)

Wells Fargo also produces state-level economic reports for several states in which it has a significant presence, including North Carolina.

Website: [wellsfargo.com/cib/insights/economics/regional-reports](http://wellsfargo.com/cib/insights/economics/regional-reports)

## REGIONAL ECONOMIC ACCOUNTS

The Bureau of Economic Analysis Regional Economic Accounts provides comprehensive economic data including GDP by state/county/metro area, personal income by geography, employment statistics, consumer spending by state, regional price parities, and industry-specific economic contributions—offering detailed economic output metrics.

Website (Snapshots): [bea.gov/data/economic-accounts/regional](http://bea.gov/data/economic-accounts/regional)

## RETAIL SALES

The North Carolina Department of Revenue provides monthly and annual (fiscal year) sales and use tax reports by county.

Website (Monthly): [ncdor.gov/news/reports-and-statistics/monthly-sales-and-use-tax-statistics](http://ncdor.gov/news/reports-and-statistics/monthly-sales-and-use-tax-statistics)

Website (Annual): [ncdor.gov/news/reports-and-statistics/state-sales-and-use-tax-reports-fiscal-year](http://ncdor.gov/news/reports-and-statistics/state-sales-and-use-tax-reports-fiscal-year)

D4 also provides retail sales data: [TEAT](#)

- Go to [D4 Homepage](#)
- Click “Other Tools” on the Menu Bar
- Select “Demographics (Area Profiles)”
- Generate the report by specifying Area Profile, Area Type, and Area
- Retail Sales info is under the Commercial/Retail/Industrial section of the Area Profile PDF Report

Website: [accessnc.nccommerce.com/DemographicsReports](http://accessnc.nccommerce.com/DemographicsReports)

## STATE AND COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

The Area Profiles Dashboard provides comprehensive economic and demographic overviews for North Carolina counties, Workforce Development Board regions, Metropolitan Statistical Areas, and Prosperity Zones, including data on population, labor force, industry employment, and wages updated monthly and annually. [TEAD](#)

Website: [analytics.nccommerce.com/Area-Profiles](http://analytics.nccommerce.com/Area-Profiles)

The EDPNC provides a tool to explore the state's and community's demographic, occupations, labor expenditures, and other related info via the link below:

Website: [properties.zoomprospector.com/northcarolina/community](http://properties.zoomprospector.com/northcarolina/community)

StatsAmerica provides easy-to-use, actionable data for economic and community developers to prepare for site RFIs, grant requests, metrics, strategic plans, and other activities. It includes a useful set of tools and reports for data related to population, housing and households, income, labor force, educational attainment, BLS employment and wages, as well as BEA employment and earnings.

Website: [statsamerica.org/USCP/default](http://statsamerica.org/USCP/default)

## WEATHER

The North Carolina State Climate Office provides climate-related services to the state, local and federal agencies, businesses and the general public.

Website: [products.climate.ncsu.edu](http://products.climate.ncsu.edu)

The Southeast Regional Climate Center at UNC-Chapel Hill also has several helpful weather-related resources, especially the map that provides historical climate data by city.

Website: [sercc.com](http://sercc.com)

# Energy & Utilities

## ENERGY (GENERAL)

The State Energy Data System (SEDS) is the source of the U.S. Energy Information Administration's (EIA) comprehensive state energy statistics. EIA's goal in maintaining SEDS is to create historical time series of energy production, consumption, prices, and expenditures by state that are defined as consistently as possible over time and across sectors for analysis and forecasting purposes. There is a lot of data available, but a brief summary for North Carolina is available at [eia.gov/state/analysis](http://eia.gov/state/analysis)

Website: [eia.gov/state/seds](http://eia.gov/state/seds)

The NC Department of Environmental Quality's Division of Energy, Mineral, and Land Resources may be able to provide information and research regarding North Carolina-specific issues.

Website: [deq.nc.gov/outreach-education/research](http://deq.nc.gov/outreach-education/research)

DSIRE is the most comprehensive source of information on incentives and policies that support renewables and energy efficiency at the federal, state, local, and utility levels, operated by the N.C. Clean Energy Technology Center at N.C. State University and funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, providing summaries of more than 2,600 incentives and policies used by over 180,000 people each month.

Website: [ncleantech.ncsu.edu/renewable-energy-resources/dsire](http://ncleantech.ncsu.edu/renewable-energy-resources/dsire)

The Alternative Fuels Data Center is the U.S. Department of Energy's comprehensive resource for alternative transportation fuels and advanced vehicle technologies, providing interactive maps of EV charging stations and alternative fuel infrastructure locations, state-by-state laws and incentives, vehicle specifications, fuel properties data, and quarterly infrastructure trend reports for electric, natural gas, propane, hydrogen, and other alternative fuels.

Website: [afdc.energy.gov](http://afdc.energy.gov)

## ELECTRICITY

The Energy Information Administration, a division of the U.S. Department of Energy, provides data on average industrial, commercial & residential electric costs for all 50 states. The first link below provides data on electricity production in the U.S. and the second has simple state-level energy profiles, including North Carolina:

Website (extensive): [eia.gov/electricity/data](http://eia.gov/electricity/data)

Website (state summaries): [eia.gov/electricity/state](http://eia.gov/electricity/state)

## NATURAL GAS

The Energy Information Administration has data on average commercial, industrial and residential natural gas use and prices. The second link below has data by state.

Website: [eia.gov/naturalgas](http://eia.gov/naturalgas)

Website (prices by location): [eia.gov/dnav/ng/ng\\_sum\\_lsum\\_dcu\\_SNC](http://eia.gov/dnav/ng/ng_sum_lsum_dcu_SNC)

## UTILITIES REGULATION

The North Carolina Utilities Commission regulates the rates and services of all public utilities in the state.

Website: [ncuc.net](http://ncuc.net)

## WIND

North Carolina's Department of Commerce provides resources and data to support offshore wind energy development, including industry opportunities, supply chain mapping, and business support tools.

Website: [commerce.nc.gov/business/key-industries-north-carolina/energy/offshore-wind-industry](http://commerce.nc.gov/business/key-industries-north-carolina/energy/offshore-wind-industry)

# Housing & Construction

## BUILDING PERMITS (RESIDENTIAL)

The U.S. Census Bureau provides data on building permits at several geographic levels including national, regional, state, MSA, and county. The data, however, is for residential construction only.

Website: [census.gov/construction/bps](http://census.gov/construction/bps)

## HOME SALES & PRICES

The National Association of Realtors provides data both on pending and existing home sales available at the regional level only.

Website (Pending Sales): [nar.realtor/research-and-statistics/housing-statistics/pending-home-sales](http://nar.realtor/research-and-statistics/housing-statistics/pending-home-sales)

Website (Existing Sales): [nar.realtor/research-and-statistics/housing-statistics/existing-home-sales](http://nar.realtor/research-and-statistics/housing-statistics/existing-home-sales)

Zillow offers a smoothed, seasonally adjusted measure of the typical home value and market changes across a given region and housing type.

Website: [zillow.com/research/data](http://zillow.com/research/data)

Redfin has direct access to data from local multiple listing services and is able to provide data on the state of the housing market.

Website: [redfin.com/news/data-center](http://redfin.com/news/data-center)

S&P/Case-Shiller is one of the most cited home price indices. While it does provide helpful information about housing trends, it tracks only the Charlotte market in North Carolina.

Website: [spglobal.com/spdji/en/indices/indicators/sp-corelogic-case-shiller-charlotte-home-price-nsa-index/#overview](http://spglobal.com/spdji/en/indices/indicators/sp-corelogic-case-shiller-charlotte-home-price-nsa-index/#overview)

## HOUSING & CONSTRUCTION (GENERAL)

The American Housing Survey, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, provides many different measures of housing across the country.

Website: [census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs](http://census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs)

The Housing Opportunity Index shows housing affordability for North Carolina metros including Charlotte, Raleigh, Durham, Greensboro, and Wilmington by calculating percentage of homes affordable to families earning median income.

Website: [nahb.org/news-and-economics/housing-economics/indices/housing-market-index](http://nahb.org/news-and-economics/housing-economics/indices/housing-market-index)

The HUD Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Database contains property-level data on North Carolina's affordable housing projects, searchable by county, city, and congressional district with unit counts and subsidy details.

Website: [huduser.gov/portal/datasets/lihtc.html](http://huduser.gov/portal/datasets/lihtc.html)

## HOUSING VACANCY & HOMEOWNERSHIP

The U.S. Census Bureau produces housing vacancy and homeownership data, as well as characteristics of units available for occupancy. State and MSA-level data are available quarterly.

Website: [census.gov/housing/hvs/data/rates](http://census.gov/housing/hvs/data/rates)

## RENTAL MARKET DATA

Apartment List provides monthly rent estimates, rental price trends, and vacancy rates for North Carolina metros and counties including Charlotte, Raleigh, Durham, Greensboro, and Winston-Salem, with downloadable CSV data.

Website: [apartmentlist.com/research/category/data-rent-estimates](http://apartmentlist.com/research/category/data-rent-estimates)

# International

## COUNTRY PROFILES

The CIA World Factbook is a very good source of information on a variety of demographic, cultural, and economic issues for every country around the world.

Website: [cia.gov/the-world-factbook](http://cia.gov/the-world-factbook)

The World Economic Outlook Database contains selected macroeconomic data series from the statistical appendix of the World Economic Outlook report, which presents the International Monetary Fund (IMF) staff's analysis and projections of economic developments at the global level, in major country groups and in many individual countries. The WEO is released in April and September/October each year.

Website: [imf.org/en/Countries](http://imf.org/en/Countries)

While there are many sources for current news, events, and trends around the globe, The Economist is one of the most reliable sources on international news and events. Some articles might require a paid subscription. For country specific information, browse for country in the search bar via the link below:

Website: [economist.com](http://economist.com)

The World Bank's Data platform provides globally comparable economic, demographic, and social indicators across countries and regions for research, policy analysis, and benchmarking.

Website: [data.worldbank.org/country](http://data.worldbank.org/country)

The OECD Economic Outlook provides twice-yearly analysis and forecasts of short-term global economic trends, including GDP growth, inflation, and labor market developments across member and partner countries.

Website: [oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/economic-outlook.html](http://oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/economic-outlook.html)

## FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT (FDI)

Foreign Direct Investment is investment in an enterprise in a foreign country. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis produces the FDI data via the following Interactive Data Application:

- Investment Type: Select FDI in the U.S.
- Data Type: Select new FDI in the U.S.

Website: [apps.bea.gov/iTable/iTable.cfm?ReqID=2&step=1](http://apps.bea.gov/iTable/iTable.cfm?ReqID=2&step=1)

EDPNC provides foreign direct investment (FDI) data from their online zoom prospector tool. To learn more about FDI in the state or in your community click the link below.

Website: [properties.zoomprospector.com/northcarolina/community/State-of-North-Carolina/r1028/fdi](http://properties.zoomprospector.com/northcarolina/community/State-of-North-Carolina/r1028/fdi)

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

The U.S. Census Bureau produces monthly international trade data at the state level via TradeStats Express (TSE) application to explore the latest trends in U.S. exports and imports by trading partner and product.

Website: [trade.gov/state-trade-data](http://trade.gov/state-trade-data)

The International Trade Administration provide Country Commercial Guides which report on market conditions, opportunities, regulations, and business customs prepared at U.S. Embassies worldwide by Commerce Department, State Department and other U.S. agencies' professionals.

Website: [trade.gov/ccg-landing-page](http://trade.gov/ccg-landing-page)

Please note that export data at the state level can become a bit complicated based on how the origin of the product is determined. In some cases, the exported product is credited to the state where shipment was consolidated and left the country, not necessarily where the product was produced. For example, Louisiana shows an incredibly high export number for agricultural products — not because Louisiana produces all those agricultural products, but because all the shipments of agricultural products from the Great Plains come down the Mississippi River and exit the country from the Port of New Orleans. More on state-level export data can be found at the following:

Website: [census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/state/index](http://census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/state/index)

EDPNC's International Trade Division provides export assistance services and resources to help North Carolina businesses enter global markets.

Website: [edpnc.com/start-or-grow-a-business/export-assistance](http://edpnc.com/start-or-grow-a-business/export-assistance)

# Social

## CENSUS DATA

The U.S. Census Bureau provides incredible amounts of data from the national level to neighborhood areas. In addition to population, there are housing, business, and economic data. Currently, results from the 2020 decennial census are available.

Website: [census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census](https://census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census)

QuickFacts tables are summary profiles showing frequently requested data from various Census Bureau programs. The link below takes you directly to North Carolina data.

Website: [census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/nc,US](https://census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/nc,US)

The Census Bureau provides quality data about the nation's people and economy. The Explore Census Data tool provides tables on multiple geographies and topics as well as data profiles, maps and visualizations and industry data.

Website: [data.census.gov/cedsci](https://data.census.gov/cedsci)

The American Community Survey (ACS) is an ongoing survey that provides data every year — giving communities the current information they need to plan investments and services.

Website: [census.gov/acs](https://census.gov/acs)

The U.S. Census Bureau produces data on social and economic effects of coronavirus on American households. This survey collects data to measure household experiences during the coronavirus pandemic.

Website: [census.gov/data/experimental-data-products/household-pulse-survey.html](https://census.gov/data/experimental-data-products/household-pulse-survey.html)

## CRIME

The NC State Bureau of Investigation compiles crime statistics.

Website: [ncsbi.gov/Services/Crime-Statistics](https://ncsbi.gov/Services/Crime-Statistics)

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) generates crime statistics for all 50 states.

Website: [fbi.gov/how-we-can-help-you/more-fbi-services-and-information/ucr](https://fbi.gov/how-we-can-help-you/more-fbi-services-and-information/ucr)

## EDUCATION

NC TOWER provides aggregate data on the employment and wage outcomes of graduates from North Carolina's public universities (UNC System) and community colleges (NCCCS). It helps track what happens to students after they complete their education in the state. 

Website: [nctower.com](https://nctower.com)

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas.

Website: [nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard](https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard)

Department of Public Instruction provides a great deal of information on North Carolina public schools. Use the link below to find Data and Statistics, Testing and Accountability Results, and Current and Historical SAT Scores by County.

Website: [ncpublicschools.org](https://ncpublicschools.org)

The Division of Non-Public Education of the North Carolina Department of Administration provides resources and statistics for home schools and private schools.

Website: [ncdnpe.org](http://ncdnpe.org)

NC Community College System provides a variety of resources, data, and information related to North Carolina's community colleges.

Website: [nccommunitycolleges.edu](http://nccommunitycolleges.edu)

Website: [nccommunitycolleges.edu/analytics](http://nccommunitycolleges.edu/analytics) (Analytics and Reporting)

The UNC System provides access to downloadable report and data tables and interactive data tools on enrollment, degrees, transfer students, freshman admissions and performance and the Educator Quality Dashboard.

Website: [northcarolina.edu/impact/stats-data-reports](http://northcarolina.edu/impact/stats-data-reports)

Website: [northcarolina.edu/impact/stats-data-reports/interactive-data-dashboards](http://northcarolina.edu/impact/stats-data-reports/interactive-data-dashboards)

Website: [northcarolina.edu/unc-system-fact-sheets](http://northcarolina.edu/unc-system-fact-sheets)

UNC System County Connections has an interactive map of 100 counties providing a snapshot of how the 16 universities contribute to both the urban and rural parts of the state. The fact sheets provide the number of undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in the UNC System institutions, number of UNC System employees residing in each county, and total dollars in economic impact made through the NC Cooperative Extension.

Website: [northcarolina.edu/impact/county-connections](http://northcarolina.edu/impact/county-connections)

The U.S. Department of Education provides a College Scorecard by institutions on student completion, debt and repayment, earnings and more.

Website: [collegescorecard.ed.gov](http://collegescorecard.ed.gov)

Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce ranks Return on Investment (ROI) of 4,500 US Colleges and Universities.

Website: [cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/collegeroi](http://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/collegeroi)

The State of Preschool Yearbook tracks North Carolina's state-funded pre-K programs including NC Pre-K, covering enrollment rates, spending per child, and quality benchmarks.

Website: [nieer.org/state-preschool-yearbook](http://nieer.org/state-preschool-yearbook)

## HEALTH

County Health Rankings provides annual rankings and data on 80+ health measures for all 100 North Carolina counties, covering health outcomes, behaviors, clinical care access, and social/economic factors.

Website: [countyhealthrankings.org](http://countyhealthrankings.org)

The Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research maintains and manages health care and workforce data used for health services research in North Carolina and beyond.

Website: [shepscenter.unc.edu/data](http://shepscenter.unc.edu/data)

The North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics publishes county-level health data and reports to support state and local health policy, planning, and program evaluation.

Website: [schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/data/county.cfm](http://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/data/county.cfm)

## INCOME

BEARFACTS is the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) Regional Fact Sheet about an area's personal income and gross domestic product. Data is available at the state, county, and MSA levels.

Website: [apps.bea.gov/regional/bearfacts](http://apps.bea.gov/regional/bearfacts)

The Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) produces single-year estimates of income and poverty for all U.S. states and counties as well as estimates of school-age children in poverty for all 13,000+ school districts.

Website: [census.gov/data-tools/demo/saipe](https://census.gov/data-tools/demo/saipe)

## POPULATION, MIGRATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

The Labor and Economic Analysis Division (LEAD) provides Demographic and economic data by racial groups in North Carolina. 

Website: [analytics.nccommerce.com/Demographic-Insights](https://analytics.nccommerce.com/Demographic-Insights)

The Office of State Budget and Management provides current and historical state, county, and municipal population estimates and future projections.

Website: [demog.state.nc.us](https://demog.state.nc.us)

QuickFacts, from the U.S. Census Bureau, also provides a quick and easy way to pull population and demographic data for the state, counties, and cities.

Website: [census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US](https://census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US)

Carolina Demography provides population-level data and other available research providing context and perspective to people working in North Carolina.

Website: [ncdemography.org](https://ncdemography.org)

The Opportunity Atlas tracks economic mobility at the Census tract level throughout North Carolina, showing adult earnings, college attendance, and employment outcomes by childhood neighborhood, race, gender, and parental income.

Website: [opportunityatlas.org](https://opportunityatlas.org)

## POVERTY RATES

The Census Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) are produced for school districts, counties, and states. The main objective of this program is to provide updated estimates of income and poverty statistics for the administration of federal programs and the allocation of federal funds to local jurisdictions.

Website: [census.gov/data-tools/demo/saipe](https://census.gov/data-tools/demo/saipe)

# State Government & Policy

## BOND RATINGS

There are three major ratings agencies: Fitch, Moody's, and S&P. Each offers information on borrowing ratings and on specific bond issues. The websites may require registration for access.

Website (Fitch): [fitchratings.com/site/home](https://fitchratings.com/site/home)

Website (Moody's): [moodys.com](https://moodys.com)

Website (S&P): [standardandpoors.com/en\\_US/web/guest/home](https://standardandpoors.com/en_US/web/guest/home)

The NC Treasurer's Office also provides information on the state's bond rating, along with information about state and local debt.

Website: [nctreasurer.com/slgi/Pages/Local-Debt](https://nctreasurer.com/slgi/Pages/Local-Debt)

## COUNTY TIER DESIGNATIONS

The North Carolina Department of Commerce annually ranks the state's 100 counties based on economic well-being and assigns each a County Tier Designation

Website: [commerce.nc.gov/grants-incentives/county-distress-rankings-tiers](http://commerce.nc.gov/grants-incentives/county-distress-rankings-tiers)

## ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITTING

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) offers an Express Permitting review process for a number of environmental permits required for development including local contacts.

Website: [deq.nc.gov/permits-regulations/express-permitting](http://deq.nc.gov/permits-regulations/express-permitting)

## INCENTIVES

The Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina provides information on financial incentives available in the state.

Website: [edpnc.com/incentives](http://edpnc.com/incentives)

The NC Department of Commerce generates annual reports for North Carolina's economic development incentive programs managed by the Department.

Website: [nccommerce.com/reports-policymakers/incentive-programs-reports](http://nccommerce.com/reports-policymakers/incentive-programs-reports)

The NC Department of Revenue provides data on the use of specific economic incentives via the link below:

Website: [ncdor.gov/reports-and-statistics/economic-incentives-reports](http://ncdor.gov/reports-and-statistics/economic-incentives-reports)

## LICENSE REQUIREMENTS (OCCUPATIONS)

LEAD provides information about occupations requiring a license in North Carolina, including licensing authority and requirements, licenses and fees. [LEAD](#)

Website: [ncbold.com/license](http://ncbold.com/license)

## TAXES

Tax related questions are one of the most frequent questions at LEAD. While there are many available resources, the North Carolina Department of Revenue provides helpful tax information for the state.

- Reports and Statistics: [ncdor.gov/reports-and-statistics](http://ncdor.gov/reports-and-statistics)
- Property Tax Rates: [ncdor.gov/taxes/north-carolinas-property-tax-system/property-tax-rates](http://ncdor.gov/taxes/north-carolinas-property-tax-system/property-tax-rates)
  - More information on property tax exemptions can be found via the Property Tax Education Partnership ([ncdor.gov/documents/manuals/tax-administration-north-carolina-course-section-21-exemptions-exclusions-and-applications/open](http://ncdor.gov/documents/manuals/tax-administration-north-carolina-course-section-21-exemptions-exclusions-and-applications/open))
- Sales Tax Rates: [ncdor.gov/taxes-forms/sales-and-use-tax/sales-and-use-tax-rates-other-information](http://ncdor.gov/taxes-forms/sales-and-use-tax/sales-and-use-tax-rates-other-information)
- Corporate Income and Franchise Tax Rates: [ncdor.gov/taxes-forms/corporate-income-franchise-tax/corporate-income-and-franchise-tax-rates](http://ncdor.gov/taxes-forms/corporate-income-franchise-tax/corporate-income-and-franchise-tax-rates)
- Incentives: [ncdor.gov/economic-incentives-reports](http://ncdor.gov/economic-incentives-reports)
- Unemployment Tax Rates: [des.nc.gov/employers/tax-rate-information](http://des.nc.gov/employers/tax-rate-information)
- Personal Income Tax Rates: [ncdor.gov/taxes-forms/individual-income-tax/tax-rate-schedules](http://ncdor.gov/taxes-forms/individual-income-tax/tax-rate-schedules)
  - Deductions (see: § 105-153.5. Modifications to adjusted gross income): [ncleg.gov/enactedlegislation/statutes/pdf/bychapter/chapter\\_105.pdf](http://ncleg.gov/enactedlegislation/statutes/pdf/bychapter/chapter_105.pdf)

The Federation of Tax Administrators provides corporate, franchise, sales and income rates for all states.

Website: [taxadmin.org/research-and-tax-rates](http://taxadmin.org/research-and-tax-rates)

The Tax Foundation produces a variety of resources and reports on cross-state comparisons of tax rates.

Website: [taxfoundation.org/center/state-tax-policy](http://taxfoundation.org/center/state-tax-policy)

The Council on State Taxation in collaboration with Ernst & Young produces an annual report on tax burdens across states.

Website: [cost.org](http://cost.org)

## WORKERS COMPENSATION

The NC Rate Bureau provides services and programs for the insurance industry in North Carolina for automobile, property, and workers compensation.

**Website:** [ncrb.org/ncrb](http://ncrb.org/ncrb)

Another source is the Workers Compensation Research Institute's Detailed Benchmark/Evaluation (DBE) Database.

**Website:** [wcrinet.org/benchmarks](http://wcrinet.org/benchmarks)

The state of Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services provides a summary of workers comp rates rankings by state. Compiled every two years.

**Website:** [oregon.gov/dcbs/cost/Pages/report-resouces](http://oregon.gov/dcbs/cost/Pages/report-resouces)

The Bureau of Labor Statistics provides employer costs for employee compensation.

**Website:** [bls.gov/eci](http://bls.gov/eci)

# Transportation

## COMMUTING PATTERNS

D4 also provides reports with commuting pattern data. To obtain data from the D4 homepage, first click on "Other tools", then Demographics. Then, select the report type "commuting profile" and the geography you want to look at by selecting the appropriate tab (County, COG, MSA, Prosperity Zone and WDB). 

**Website:** [accessnc.nccommerce.com/DemographicsReports](http://accessnc.nccommerce.com/DemographicsReports)

LEAD also maintains an interactive dashboard that visualizes worker commuting flows, showing the relationship between where workers live and where they are employed for various geographies across the state. 

**Website:** [analytics.nccommerce.com/Commuting-Patterns](http://analytics.nccommerce.com/Commuting-Patterns)

OnTheMap contains the most recent commuting patterns for local areas. The source of commuting data is The Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program. The LEHD program produces new, cost effective, public-use information combining federal, state and Census Bureau data on employers and employees under the Local Employment Dynamics (LED) Partnership.

**Website:** [onthemap.ces.census.gov](http://onthemap.ces.census.gov)

## TRANSPORTATION (GENERAL)

The North Carolina Department of Transportation provides Traffic Volume Maps which provided annual average daily traffic (AADT) volume maps that present traffic average for a specific year at specific points on North Carolina's roads.

**Website:** [connect.ncdot.gov/resources/State-Mapping/pages/traffic-volume-maps](http://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/State-Mapping/pages/traffic-volume-maps)

## AIR TRAVEL STATISTICS

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics provides quarterly statistics by all carriers and airports for passengers, flights, net income and operating revenue.

**Website:** [transtats.bts.gov/Data\\_Elements](http://transtats.bts.gov/Data_Elements)

## FREIGHT & LOGISTICS

The Freight Analysis Framework provides North Carolina freight movement data by mode, commodity type, value, and tonnage for inbound, outbound, and intra-state movements, plus NC metro-level freight flows.

**Website:** [ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/freight\\_analysis/faf](http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/freight_analysis/faf)

# Workforce

## CAREER INFORMATION

LEAD provides resources that can assist in exploring careers, including detailed information on occupational ratings, job duties, education/training, wages, employment outlook, and more. NCcareers combines career information from national sites including [O\\*NET](#), [CareerOneStop](#), [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#) (OOH), and more. [LEAD](#)

Website: [nccareers.org](#)

NCcareers Educator Resources provides downloadable lesson plans, worksheets, and career exploration tools for educators, including grade-specific materials (4-12 and post-secondary) covering career interests, occupational exploration, reality checks, and career planning activities [LEAD](#)

Website: [nccareers.org/educator-resources/printables-tools](#)

Star Jobs is a new and simplified way to help identify promising occupations. Star ratings are assigned based on wages, projected growth rate, and projected job openings, and each occupation has a rating of between 1 and 5 stars. [LEAD](#)

Website: [tools.nccareers.org/starjobs](#)

LEAD produces the Long-term (10-year) industry and occupational employment projections every two years. Based on historical data, these projections provide a guide for how the state's economic landscape may evolve given the recent economic trends. [LEAD](#)

Website: [ncommerce.com/data-tools-reports/labor-market-data-tools/employment-projections](#)

The Staffing Patterns provide information on how industries and occupations relate to each other by showing which occupations work in a selected industry and which industries hire selected occupations.

Website: [analytics.ncommerce.com/Staffing-Patterns](#)

The Plan My Career section on NCcareers has a suite of career planning tools that helps users map career pathways, including the Career Plan Builder (step-by-step roadmaps with goal tracking). The Career Journey Builder lets you map your path three ways: start with your education to see matching careers, use your current occupation to explore advancement options, or begin with a goal career and identify stepping-stone positions along the way. [LEAD](#)

Website: [nccareers.org/career-tree](#)

The Training and Education section of NCcareers.org helps users find and prepare for educational opportunities, including Program Locator (searchable database of NC college programs), Prepare for College (college readiness resources and planning tools), Prepare for Training (workforce training guidance), Find Private Training (accredited private training providers), and Prepare for Work (job readiness and employment preparation resources). [LEAD](#)

Website: [nccareers.org/training-and-education](#)

## SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLS

The Interest Finder is an O\*NET-based Holland RIASEC personality assessment available in 60-question full and 30-question short versions, identifying a user's primary interest areas and matching them to compatible occupations. [LEAD](#)

Website: [nccareers.org/find-career/interest-finder](#)

Reality Check is a budget calculator that estimates the income needed to support a desired lifestyle based on 12 expense categories (housing, utilities, transportation, food, healthcare, etc.), then links users to occupations that meet their salary requirements. 

Website: [nccareers.org/find-career/reality-check](http://nccareers.org/find-career/reality-check)

Career Cluster Match is a survey that identifies which of the 16 national career clusters align with a user's work preferences, skills, and academic interests, helping narrow career exploration to relevant pathways. 

Website: [nccareers.org/find-career/career-cluster-match](http://nccareers.org/find-career/career-cluster-match)

The Quick Assessment is a five-question rapid career assessment that matches users to occupations based on personality type, work values, and interests for those seeking fast results. 

Website: [nccareers.org/quick-start](http://nccareers.org/quick-start)

The Work Values Sorter is a card-sort assessment where users rank 20 work values (such as income, flexibility, creativity, and job security) to identify their job priorities and match them to compatible careers. 

Website: [nccareers.org/find-career/work-value-sorter](http://nccareers.org/find-career/work-value-sorter)

The Skills Matcher is a 40-question assessment where users rate their skill levels across various competencies to identify occupations that match their existing abilities. 

Website: [nccareers.org/find-career/skill-matcher](http://nccareers.org/find-career/skill-matcher)

Be Your Own Boss is a 25-question entrepreneurship readiness assessment that evaluates whether a user has the traits, skills, and risk tolerance suited for starting their own business. 

Website: [nccareers.org/find-career/be-your-own-boss](http://nccareers.org/find-career/be-your-own-boss)

## LABOR FORCE

The Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program provides information on labor force and employment through D4. 

- Click on LAUS on D4 Homepage
- Select your region on the left panel (state, county, MSA),
- Select Year and Time Periods (multiple periods can be selected by holding Ctrl and clicking on the time period)
- Select Standard View or Download to Excel or CSV file.

Website: [d4.ncommerce.com/LausSelection](http://d4.ncommerce.com/LausSelection)

The North Carolina Labor Supply and Demand dashboard provides trends on jobseekers, job openings and completers by career pathways and career clusters by property zone region.

Website: [analytics.ncommerce.com/NC-Labor-Supply-Demand](http://analytics.ncommerce.com/NC-Labor-Supply-Demand)

The same data, along with other states and geographies, are located at the BLS site.

Website: [bls.gov/lau](http://bls.gov/lau)

NCWorks also provides handy labor market information. From the homepage, click on "Labor Market Analysis" on the left side.

Website: [ncworks.gov/vosnet/Default](http://ncworks.gov/vosnet/Default)

The NCWorks Commission Newsletter Dashboard provides quarterly labor market highlights designed for the NCWorks Commission, featuring statewide and county-level employment data, unemployment trends, and key workforce indicators.

Website: [analytics.nccommerce.com/commission-newsletter](http://analytics.nccommerce.com/commission-newsletter)

Part of the LEHD program, J2J Explorer is a web-based analysis tool that visualizes worker reallocation in the United States. It traces worker movements between jobs (job-to-job flows), as well as flows into and out of nonemployment. It is particularly useful for analyzing labor market turnover, "job hopping," and earnings changes associated with changing jobs.

Website: [j2jexplorer.ces.census.gov](http://j2jexplorer.ces.census.gov)

The NC Workforce Service Delivery Outcome Dashboard is an interactive tool displaying performance metrics for North Carolina's 23 Workforce Development Boards, including individuals served, services provided, program completers, employment outcomes, and median wages by program year and region.

Website: [analytics.nccommerce.com/NC-WDB-Services](http://analytics.nccommerce.com/NC-WDB-Services)

## LAYOFFS AND CLOSINGS

Due to the federal sequester legislation, the Mass Layoff Statistics program, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, has been eliminated. The program had collected reports on mass layoff actions that resulted in workers being separated from their jobs. Historical data are available at the following.

Website: [bls.gov/mls](http://bls.gov/mls)

In addition, the NC Department of Commerce discontinued support for the collection and publication of Announced Business Closings and Layoffs effective May 2013.

The Division of Workforce Solutions at the NC Department of Commerce continues to provide data related to mass layoffs and plant closings through its Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) system. LEAD created an interactive dashboard using data from WARN reports.

Website: [nccommerce.com/data-tools-reports/labor-market-data-tools/workforce-warn-reports](http://nccommerce.com/data-tools-reports/labor-market-data-tools/workforce-warn-reports)

Website: [commerce.nc.gov/data-tools-reports/labor-market-data-tools/workforce-warn-reports/data-dashboard-workforce-warn-reports](http://commerce.nc.gov/data-tools-reports/labor-market-data-tools/workforce-warn-reports/data-dashboard-workforce-warn-reports)

## OCCUPATION CLASSIFICATION (STANDARD OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION)

Standard Occupational Classifications, or SOC codes, are the primary method to categorize occupations. Information and a handy look-up tool are provided by BLS at the following:

Website: [bls.gov/soc](http://bls.gov/soc)

## QUARTERLY WORKFORCE INDICATORS (LONGITUDINAL EMPLOYER-HOUSEHOLD DYNAMICS)

The Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI) provides local labor market statistics by industry, worker demographics, an establishment's age and size, and is part of the Census' Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program. QWI provides statistics on employment, earnings, and job flows at detailed levels of geography and industry and for different demographic groups. There's also an interactive extraction tool for creating customized data that can be downloaded.

Website: [qwiexplorer.ces.census.gov/static/explore](http://qwiexplorer.ces.census.gov/static/explore)

Website: [lehd.ces.census.gov](http://lehd.ces.census.gov)

Website (Extraction tool): [ledextract.ces.census.gov/static/data](http://ledextract.ces.census.gov/static/data)

## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (LOCAL AREA UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS "LAUS")

LEAD's D4 allows users to create customized data sets for unemployment data at the state, county, and sub county levels. 

- Click on LAUS on D4 Homepage
- Select your region on the left panel (state, county, MSA),
- Select Year and Time Periods (multiple periods can be selected by holding Ctrl and clicking on the time period)
- Select Standard View or Download to Excel or CSV file.

Website: [d4.ncommerce.com/LausSelection](http://d4.ncommerce.com/LausSelection)

For other states, and sub state areas, the Bureau of Labor Statistics offers several tools for accessing unemployment rates.

Website: [bls.gov/lau](http://bls.gov/lau)

NCWorks is another option for finding unemployment data. Just follow the link and choose your region:

Website: [ncworks.gov/vosnet/dashboards](http://ncworks.gov/vosnet/dashboards)

## UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) AND UI CLAIM DATA:

The North Carolina Department of Commerce's Division of Employment Security provides information about Unemployment Insurance activities in North Carolina.

Website (Home Page): [des.nc.gov/DES](http://des.nc.gov/DES)

Website (General Information): [des.nc.gov/individuals/apply-unemployment/what-you-need-file-unemployment](http://des.nc.gov/individuals/apply-unemployment/what-you-need-file-unemployment)

Website (Unemployment Insurance Claims Dashboard): [analytics.ncommerce.com/NC-UI-Claims](http://analytics.ncommerce.com/NC-UI-Claims)

The U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration provides weekly claims data which is used in current economic analysis of unemployment trends in the nation, and in each state.

Website: [oui.dolleta.gov/unemploy/claims](http://oui.dolleta.gov/unemploy/claims)

The Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claims dashboard provides UI claims and UI claimant information by gender, age, industry, race, and ethnicity. 

Website: [analytics.ncommerce.com/NC-UI-Claims](http://analytics.ncommerce.com/NC-UI-Claims)

## UNIONS

The Union Membership and Coverage Database is an Internet data resource providing private and public-sector labor union membership, coverage, and density estimates compiled from the Current Population Survey (CPS).

Website: [unionstats.com](http://unionstats.com)

The National Labor Relations Board is an independent federal agency vested with the power to safeguard employees' rights to organize and to determine whether to have unions as their bargaining representative. The agency also acts to prevent and remedy unfair labor practices committed by private sector employers and unions. The regional office is located in Winston-Salem and the phone number is (336) 631-5201.

Website: [nrlb.gov](http://nrlb.gov)

The National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation Inc. provides a useful map of states and their "right-to-work" status.

Website: [nrtw.org/rtw](http://nrtw.org/rtw)

## VETERAN EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES (BY OCCUPATION)

The U.S. Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics tool provides statistics on Veteran Employment Outcomes (VEO) for recently discharged Army Veterans. These statistics are tabulated by military specialization, service characteristics, employer industry (if employed), and veteran demographics.

Website: [lehd.ces.census.gov/applications/veo/occupation/detail](http://lehd.ces.census.gov/applications/veo/occupation/detail)

## FORMERLY INCARCERATED OUTCOMES

The North Carolina Reentry Outcome Reporting System (NC RORS) tracks employment and wage outcomes for individuals exiting the prison system, displaying data on program participants, employment rates, and median wages by cohort year and reentry program category. [LEAD](#)

Website: [analytics.nccommerce.com/NC-RORS](https://analytics.nccommerce.com/NC-RORS)

## WAGES (BY INDUSTRY — QCEW)

The Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) is the best source of information on wages, by industry and can be accessed through D4. [LEAD](#)

Website: [d4.nccommerce.com/QCEWSelection](https://d4.nccommerce.com/QCEWSelection)

NCWorks is another option for QCEW and industry data which is the same data in D4.

Website: [ncworks.gov/vosnet/dashboards](https://ncworks.gov/vosnet/dashboards)

## WAGES (BY OCCUPATION — OEWS)

The Occupational Employment and Wages program is the best source of information on wages by occupation and can be easily accessed through D4. Please note that OEWS data is not a time series and may not be useful for comparing one-time period against another. [LEAD](#)

Website: [d4.nccommerce.com/OESelection](https://d4.nccommerce.com/OESelection)

NCWorks is another option for finding OEWS data which is the same data in D4.

Website: [ncworks.gov/vosnet/dashboards](https://ncworks.gov/vosnet/dashboards)

## Disclaimers

While it can be a challenge to find data, it can sometimes be an even greater challenge to understand where exactly the data came from, how it was collected, and what its limitations might be. It's a challenge we face every day: knowing "good" data from "bad" data.

While we would like to be able to explain every strength and weakness of every resource highlighted in this guide, we would fill volumes. We've done our best to include useful data that also meets that "good" data test, but always remember that data has its limitations. We've also tried to underscore some of the major limitations of the sources included here, but we don't strive to cover every potential issue. So, please, always keep that in mind, and feel free to reach out to LEAD for questions about how to use the data in this Research Manual. If you have any questions or find something that might be useful to add to the Manual, please email us at [lead@commerce.nc.gov](mailto:lead@commerce.nc.gov), and put in subject line Research Manual.

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