



NC DEPARTMENT
of COMMERCE
LABOR & ECONOMIC
ANALYSIS

LMI TUESDAYS!

Session 2025-11: Getting the Most Up-to-Date Jobs
Numbers for NC: Insights from CES

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What is the BLS Current Employment Statistics (CES) Program?

- Federal-state cooperative program between the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and state labor market information shop (NC Department of Commerce Labor & Economic Analysis Division)
- Used to track employment change over time
 - Measures monthly job changes and losses across industries
 - Available at the national, state, and metropolitan statistical area level
- Also called the “payroll” or “establishment” survey
- Estimates the number of jobs monthly based on a sample of 121,000 businesses covering 631,000 worksites nationwide

Why Does CES Data Matter?

- The CES is an important indicator for analyzing the health of the U.S. economy
- The Federal Reserve uses CES data in formulating monetary policy
- Government officials and policymakers use CES data for forecasting tax revenues and planning budgets
- Researchers use the data to analyze the economy and labor markets
- Businesses, trade associations, and labor unions use the data for planning

Where Does CES Data Come From?

- Businesses are sampled from the [Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages \(QCEW\)](#)
- The QCEW is a quarterly count of businesses, employment, and wages that cover more than 95% of all jobs in the United States
- Businesses that are selected to participate respond to the CES survey monthly for 2-4 years

What Does the CES Measure?

- The CES survey asks businesses:
 - how **many people were on their payroll** during the month
 - how many total hours employees worked during the month
 - the total pay earned during the month
 - how many female employees and/or production employees were on their payroll during the month (some industries)
- CES publishes the number of jobs each month
- CES also publishes data on earnings, hours worked, production employees, and women employees for certain industries

Example of CES Survey Form

Page 3 of 4

Report Number:

Name of Firm:

Each month report your payroll information for the pay period that includes the 12th of the month. For questions refer to page 2 for the **Column** definitions or.

Employees receive pay:
Pay Group 1
Commissions Pay Group 1

		Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
		EMPLOYEE COUNT	WOMEN EMPLOYEE COUNT	PAYROLL, EXCLUDING COMMISSIONS (Whole dollars)	COMMISSIONS, PAID AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH (Whole dollars)	HOURS, INCLUDING OVERTIME (Whole hours)
Pay period that includes January 12th 2025	All Employees			\$	\$	
	Production Employees		N/A. Data not collected.	\$	\$	
February 12th 2025	All Employees			\$	\$	
	Production Employees		N/A. Data not collected.	\$	\$	
March 12th 2025	All Employees			\$	\$	
	Production Employees		N/A. Data not collected.	\$	\$	
April 12th 2025	All Employees			\$	\$	
	Production Employees		N/A. Data not collected.	\$	\$	
May 12th 2025	All Employees			\$	\$	
	Production Employees		N/A. Data not collected.	\$	\$	

CES Strengths and Limitations

Strengths

- Timely - designed to “take the pulse” of the economy
- Wide in geographic scope
- High level of industry detail
- Seasonally adjusted
- Numbers can be compared over time

Limitations

- Excludes some types of workers, such as agricultural workers
- Subject to sampling error, reporting errors, and late reporters

CES Estimates Subject to Revisions

ESTABLISHMENT DATA

Summary table B. Establishment data, seasonally adjusted

Category	July 2024	May 2025	June <u>2025(p)</u>	July <u>2025(p)</u>
EMPLOYMENT BY SELECTED INDUSTRY (Over-the-month change, in thousands)				
Total nonfarm	88	19	14	73
Total private	40	69	3	83

- Note the “(p)” on the BLS publication, which stands for **preliminary**
- Monthly revisions between **preliminary** and **final** estimates capture late reporters
- Annual revisions (aka “benchmarking”) replace estimates with “full universe” counts from the QCEW
 - Serves as an annual quality check on the state area estimates

CES vs QCEW

CES (Current Employment Statistics)	QCEW (Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)
An estimate of jobs based on a sample and modeling	A complete count of jobs
Published every month	Published every quarter
Published in the month following the reference month	Published approximately 5 months after the end of the reference quarter
Based on survey data	Based largely on administrative tax data
Includes seasonally adjusted estimates	Not seasonally adjusted
Intended to be compared over time	Not intended to be compared over time

Two Ways to Access CES Data

The screenshot shows the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like HOME, SUBJECTS, DATA TOOLS, PUBLICATIONS, ECONOMIC RELEASES, CLASSROOM, and BETA. Below this, a breadcrumb trail reads: Bureau of Labor Statistics > Current Employment Statistics (State and Metro Area) > Data > Databases. The main heading is "State and Metro Area Employment, Hours, & Earnings". Below this is a navigation bar with links: SAE Home, SAE Publications, SAE Data (highlighted), SAE Methods, About SAE, and Contact SAE. Under "Featured SAE Searchable Databases", there's a table with columns: Database Name, Special Notice, Top Picks, Data Finder, One Screen, Multi-Screen, Tables, and Text Files. The first row is for "Employment, Hours, and Earnings - State and Metro Area (Current Employment Statistics - CES)". Below this, there's a section for "Demand Driven Data Delivery (D4)" with a header "Welcome to D4" and a list of data products: Industry Employment (QCEW), Unemployment Rates, Payroll Jobs (CES), Employment by Occupation (OEWS), Largest Employers, and Employment Projections.

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State and Metro Area Employment, Hours, & Earnings

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Featured SAE Searchable Databases

Database Name	Special Notice	Top Picks	Data Finder	One Screen	Multi-Screen	Tables	Text Files
Employment, Hours, and Earnings - State and Metro Area (Current Employment Statistics - CES)							

4 DEMAND DRIVEN DATA DELIVERY

Data - Other tools Resources -

Welcome to D4

Demand Driven Data Delivery

- Industry Employment (QCEW)
- Unemployment Rates
- Payroll Jobs (CES)
- Employment by Occupation (OEWS)
- Largest Employers
- Employment Projections

BLS website:

<https://www.bls.gov/ces/data/> (National)

<https://www.bls.gov/sae/data/> (State and Area)

Demand Driven Data Delivery (D4):

<https://d4.nccommerce.com/>

Additional CES Resources:

- [About BLS CES](#)
- [CES FAQ](#)
- [CES Handbook of Methods](#)
- [Comparison between CES, QCEW, and the Current Population Survey \(CPS\)](#)
- [NC Commerce D4](#)
- [Monthly LEAD press releases](#)
- [Monthly CES release dates](#)

Questions?

Feel free to reach out!

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