

NAME: _____

Unemployment and Industry in Your Community

1. To find local unemployment data for the last 10 years, go to:
<http://www.bls.gov/lau/home.htm#overview>. Click on your state and your county. Now click on Census Bureau, Tiger Map County Profile, Income and Poverty.

Do you notice a pattern in the unemployment data for your community?

Specifically look at the unemployment rates during the recessions of 1992 and 2001 to early 2002, as well as the period of strong economic growth in 1998-2000. Does unemployment in your community tend to be cyclical, rising and falling with the national average, or does it tend to remain fairly steady throughout periods of economic instability?

Did your community suffer a sudden jump in structural unemployment due to the closing of a major employer?

2. To compare your local unemployment rates to the national unemployment rates, open a separate browser and go to:

[http://data.bls.gov/servlet/SurveyOutputServlet?
data_tool=latest_numbers&series_id=LFS21000000](http://data.bls.gov/servlet/SurveyOutputServlet?data_tool=latest_numbers&series_id=LFS21000000)

How does unemployment in your community compare to the national unemployment rate over the past 10 years?

Is it generally higher, lower, or similar?

Does it move with the national average or tend to remain steady?

From what you know of industry and employment in your community, can you explain why your unemployment figures would be similar to or different from the national averages?

3. To find demographic data about your community, employers, and industries, use a search engine to enter the name of your community and state, along with the word “demographics”. Depending on the size of your community, you may be able to find a lot of information about local employers and industry. You might also search to see if your community, your local chamber of commerce, or your local economic development council has its own web page with information. You may also be able to find information on your state government’s website, with links to your local community.

Who are the major employers in your community?

Do they tend to be focused on one specific industry, or is the local economy diverse?

Are the major industries very sensitive to cyclical economic changes (as are the automotive, durable goods, and tourism industries) or are they concentrated in areas that are less sensitive to economic downturns (such as education, agriculture, and medicine)?

How can the concentration or diversity of industry, as well as the sector of industry, explain the fluctuations in local unemployment rates?