

Organization of charts and applications of OES data

The presentation of figures in this chartbook is intended to demonstrate a variety of applications of OES data. Figures are organized into five categories: the first focuses on detailed occupations, the second focuses on occupational variability by industry, the third highlights patterns of specific industries, and the fourth and fifth focus on labor markets of States and local areas.

The following are some examples of useful applications of OES data:

Detailed occupational data can be used by jobseekers or employers to study wages for workers in certain occupations and to assess wage variation within and across occupations. Wage variation within an occupation can result from several factors, including industry, geographic location, and workers' individual experiences or qualifications. Useful data for jobseekers include information on the industries or geographic areas that have the highest levels of employment or the highest average wages for an occupation. Career and guidance counselors can use OES data to examine information on the occupational choices available to their clients.

Industry-specific occupational data can be used by human resources professionals in salary negotiations or to ensure that their wages are competitive with those of other businesses in their area or industry. Information on the types of jobs that exist within an industry can be used to compare average staffing patterns with those of one's own company. Occupational employment statistics by industry may be useful in assessing the impact of shifts in technology and other macroeconomic trends on the types of jobs available. BLS and State government employment projections programs use OES data as an input to their employment projections; these projections can be used to predict training and education demands.

Information on specific geographic areas can be used to assess the labor market of a particular area. OES State-level data can be used to make assessments about the diversity of a State's economy or to make comparisons among States. Occupational composition—that is, the mix of employment by occupation in a particular geographic area or industry—can provide clues to how a State or regional economy can hold up in adverse conditions that primarily affect a certain sector of the economy. Differences in both occupational composition and occupational wage rates also help explain differences in average wages across States. For example, States with high average wages may have larger shares of their employment in high-paying occupations, higher wages within each occupation, or some combination of both factors.

Like State data, metropolitan and nonmetropolitan area data can be used to study the diversity of local area economies. Businesses can use data to see whether it may be beneficial to relocate to a particular area. OES wage data can be used to compare wages among geographic areas as part of an analysis of labor costs. OES occupational employment data may indicate whether workers are available in occupations for which a business will need to hire. For example, businesses that require computer specialists or skilled production workers may want to identify areas that have high levels of employment in these occupations.