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**Session 2: Workforce Development Data**

Led by Matthew Kachura, Baltimore

Notes by Rob Pitingolo

Inspiration for this session is improving workforce development indicators (Kachura)

People often ask for jobs data, they want to drill down to smaller levels that what we can offer. People also ask for business data and farm data (Tahmida Shamsuddin, Atlanta).

We don’t have good indictors on this topic. People really want to know about unemployment (Warshauer, City of Charlotte).

What are some business databases?

* Dunn and Bradstreet
* InfoUSA (sales, costs, employees, location, contact info)
* ESRI

Is Esri business data any good (Newcomer, Denver)?

Is there a preferred business database? (Kachura)

We did a survey and compared it to InfoUSA. We found that they missed a lot of businesses (Betts, Memphis). InfoUSA has a hard time getting a hold of people to answer the questions and they try to cover the whole country. They tend to miss businesses in marginal neighborhoods.

Business district geography doesn’t align with census tracts (Warshauer)

What’s the purpose of using geography? People just commute to jobs (Gaul, Hartford). Seems more useful to match people to jobs based on skill.

What are indicators constructed for? We’re using them to get at vitality of a neighborhood, not for the purpose of matching people to jobs (Kachura).

LEHD has info on resident home and their place of work (Kachura) which seems like it has a lot of potential. Goes down to the block group.

* It’s synthesized but still useful (Kingsley, Urban Institute)
* It’s not a sample, it’s based on admin records (Betts)
* No business names or anything like that (Gaul)

On the Map is the tool for using LEHD data (Kachura) and you can import your own shapefiles and customize it to some extent.

LEHD data has some obvious issues, like the guy who commutes 1,000 miles to work (Hirsh, Cleveland). The data also doesn’t add up to 100%.

ESRI just translates InfoUSA so be careful with that (Newcomer).

Quality of this data depends on your needs. Do you care where people are shopping? Do you care where people are working ? (Warshauer)

* People in neighborhoods care more about grocery stores than corporate HQs

Conference board help wanted ads is another data source (Gaul).

What is the data source for retail leakage? (Betts)

* Some InfoUSA revenue data (Kachura)
* Consumer surveys to figure out spending of consumers.

Nearly impossible to get info on people who works in the gray market (Gaul)

* The gray market is related to other issues like safety and crime (Betts)
* Lots of anecdotes about this stuff but no detailed data that I’ve found (Gaul)
* Bureau of Labor Statistics has some discouraged worker data but not small geography (Kachura)
* ACS has discouraged worker data but the MOEs too big (Betts)

The ‘million dollar database’ is useful (Wascaclus, Alumni - Minneapolis). I’ve heard of it but never used it before.

Are regions sharing data about training programs?

* We had to do a survey because it seemed like the only way (Shamsuddin)
* State DOL often has good data on this stuff (Gaul) but didn’t publish it, so other folks tried to cobble it together themselves and came up short.

Community colleges run some training programs, there may be some data there (Betts). I think some state agency must be keeping track of that, not sure who though.

We often don’t get feedback on how our data is being used and why it is being used (Kachura). It’s hard to know if we’ve got the right stuff for this reason. We don’t have a good sense of what people are doing with the workforce data we publish.

Co-star is a source for business/corporate data (Warshauer)

InfoUSA allows us to ID a ‘successful business’ by looking at the age of the business. Can use that to develop some indicators (Kachura).

* Grocery stores, convenience stores service the neighborhood (Kachura)
* A law office doesn’t serve the same purpose (Kachura)
* Can’t ID minority or women owned businesses from this data (Kachura)

Are cities retaining college graduates (Shamsuddin)?

* Longitudinal study of a cohort of people in CT to get at this (Gaul)
* PUMS data to see who is moving in/out, kind of debunks brain drain (Hirsh)
* Data about people moving county-to-county (Betts)

What about Experian (Betts)?

* UI never used it (Kingsley)
* (Nobody else said they’ve used it)

Workforce development just seems like a “people” based study not a “neighborhood” based study and the data reflects this (Kachura). We have knowledge of people, then a different knowledge of neighborhoods, but it’s not really connected.

ACS MOE are scary, yeah, but what else have we got? (Kachura)

We use LEHD to develop some indicators (Gustavo Rotondero, Grand Rapids) but hit a wall because the accuracy seemed very suspect. We worked with a professor to develop some thresholds. Decided that you need at least 10,000 people in a geography to report on that place.

Can NNIP buy some business data and then share it among each other (Shamsuddin)?

* We can establish a working group to figure it out (Kingsley) People who have used this data can put out a white paper to figure out the feasibility of this.
* I’m concerned about the quality of the data in one city vs another (Kachura)
* Some discrepancies between where a person works and the address where they’re listed to work (Kachura)
* Example: a guy owned 5 McDonalds and did payroll out of one, so it looked like one McDonalds had 500 workers and the others had none (Kachura)
* Cleaning up location vs. reported location is a big challenge (Kingsley)

I think we can get someone to fund an overview of what data is available on these questions (Kingsley)

How about data about rejected job candidates (Gaul)? Companies reject a lot of candidates and if we know why or who they are it could be helpful.

* That’s interesting but what does it say about a neighborhood? (Kachura)
* There’s not much incentive for anyone to give this out, there has to be a compelling neighborhood benefit (Gaul)

There’s some health data that could be mixed in, like when someone lost a job because of a drug test (Betts).

Can we say that some type of people tend to live in some type of neighborhoods (Betts).

Drug screens seem like big problems in neighborhoods that have high poverty, and we really don’t even know what the impact is (Betts)

I don’t think all indicators have to be neighborhood indicators. Air quality is not confined by boundaries, for example (Warshauer)

Research question: are job fairs effective? We have these huge fairs with hundreds of people turning out and we have no idea if the people who go to these ever get jobs?

* Sounds like you have to go back to the employer or employee to figure it out (Kachura)
* It’s really difficult (Warshauer)

The before mentioned ‘million dollar database’ is actually Dunn and Bradstreet (Newcomer)