



Labor & Economic Analysis

Commerce

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH MANUAL



NORTH CAROLINA
Department of Commerce
Labor & Economic Analysis

Introduction

The Labor and Economic Analysis Division (LEAD) has created this Research Manual to help our partners across the state find the data and resources they need as quickly and easily as possible. And there is certainly a lot of data out there. In the past, it used to be that collecting data was a real challenge, but now with so many sources of information, it's almost the opposite problem: information overload.

As a result, we've put this guide together to highlight some of the "best" and most useful resources we use on a regular basis. While we would love to create a comprehensive list and explanation of all the available economic data resources out there, we concede that that exercise would be an overwhelming task. Instead, by highlighting some of the most useful sources for research and data, and by updating and enhancing this manual on a regular basis, we hope that this guide becomes a valuable tool for you.

How to Use This Guide

We've organized this guide by category, and the Table of Contents at the front reflects that. So, for example, if you're looking for data identifying businesses in your community, go to the Business and Industry section.

We've separated the data sources into several categories, listed and explained below:

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

While we've done our best to categorize these in a way that makes the most sense, we realize that some categorizations are difficult (e.g., should data re: wage rates by industry be in Business & Industry or Workforce?). As a result, we've also included an A-Z Index in the back of this manual that sorts every category and topic alphabetically.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
How to Use This Guide	1
LEAD’s Top Data Requests and Questions	5
Businesses & Industry	6
Company Lists and Directories	6
Business Search (Accessnc)	6
Business Search (REFERENCEUSA via NC Live)	6
Top Employers (by County and State)	7
Company Briefs, Reports and Filings	7
Annual Reports	7
Company Profiles	7
Securities Filings (SEC)	7
State Corporate Filings	9
Industry Data (General)	9
Annual Survey of Manufacturers (U.S. Census Bureau)	9
Industry Classification (North American Industrial Classification System – NAICS)	9
Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (via LEAD’s D4)	9
Industry Data (Specific Industries)	10
Industry Reports (LEAD)	10
Industry Reports (EDPNC)	10
Industry Profiles (Duke)	10
Agriculture	10
Banks	10
Biotechnology	10
Military	11
Military & Government Contracting	11
Travel & Tourism	11
Small Business	11
Small Business (General)	11
SBIR/STTR Awards	12
Venture Capital	12
Other Business Data	12
Licensing (Requirements for Businesses)	12
New Business Starts and Failures (Business Dynamics)	12

Worker Safety (OSHA) _____	12
Energy & Utilities _____	12
Energy (General) _____	12
Electricity _____	13
Natural Gas _____	13
Utilities Regulation _____	13
General Economic Information _____	13
Gross Domestic Product _____	13
Prices: Consumer Price Index (CPI) _____	13
Prices: Producer Price Index (PPI) _____	13
Prices: Cost of Living Calculators _____	14
Regional Business Conditions _____	14
Retail Sales _____	14
State Rankings and Comparisons _____	14
Weather _____	14
Housing & Construction _____	15
Building Permits (Residential) _____	15
Home Sales & Prices _____	15
Housing & Construction (General) _____	15
Housing Vacancy & Homeownership _____	15
International _____	15
Country Profiles _____	15
Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) _____	16
International Trade _____	16
Social _____	16
Census Data _____	16
Crime _____	17
Education _____	17
Income _____	17
Population, Migration & Demographics _____	18
Poverty Rates _____	18
State Government & Policy _____	18
Bond Ratings _____	18
County Tier Designations _____	18
Environmental Permitting _____	18
Incentives _____	19
License Requirements (Occupations) _____	19

Taxes _____	19
Workers Compensation _____	19
Transportation _____	20
Commuting Patterns _____	20
Transportation (General) _____	20
Workforce _____	20
CAREER INFORMATION _____	20
Labor Force _____	20
Layoffs and Closings _____	20
Occupation Classification (Standard Occupational Classification) _____	21
Quarterly Workforce Indicators (Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics) _____	21
Unemployment Rate (Local Area Unemployment Statistics “LAUS”) _____	21
Unemployment Insurance _____	21
Unions _____	22
Wages (By Industry — QCEW) _____	22
Wages (By Occupation — OES) _____	22
Experts on the North Carolina Economy _____	Error! Bookmark not defined.
NC State University _____	Error! Bookmark not defined.
UNC-Chapel Hill _____	Error! Bookmark not defined.
UNC-Charlotte _____	Error! Bookmark not defined.
UNC-Greensboro _____	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Wells Fargo _____	Error! Bookmark not defined.
LEAD’s “Favorite” Sources for Data _____	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Disclaimers _____	23
INDEX – A TO Z _____	24

LEAD's Top Data Requests and Questions

Before we get into the guide, we would like to highlight questions that LEAD gets on a very regular basis.

1. State and Local Unemployment Rates:

There are multiple places to find data related to the state and local unemployment rates:

Labor and Economic Analysis Division: For a simple snapshot of [state](#) and [local](#) unemployment rates, LEAD provides the monthly releases and lists of rates at:

Website: <http://www.nccommerce.com/lead>

For a calendar of state and local area release dates click [here](#).

LEAD's [AccessNC Dashboard](#) provides a snapshot of current state and local unemployment statistics and links to LEAD's Demand Driven Data Delivery System (D4): D4 allows users to create customized data sets for unemployment data at the state, county, and sub-county levels. From the homepage, click on LAUS, then select the geography on the left (state, county, MSA), and the time periods (multiple periods can be selected by holding Ctrl and clicking on the time period). Then choose Standard View (data appears below), or Download (create an Excel file).

Website: d4.nccommerce.com

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

Website: <https://www.ncworks.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx>

2. Local Tax Rates – Property & Sales Tax

The NC Department of Revenue provides handy property and sales tax information on its website.

Website (Property Tax): www.dornrc.com/taxes/property/rates.html

Website (Sales Tax): www.dornrc.com/taxes/sales/taxrates.html

3. Wage Rates

The Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) is the best source of information for wages, separated by industry and region. Both LEAD's D4 and [AccessNC Dashboard](#) can get you the data.

Click on D-4 QCEW link below. Then select your geography on the left, then your other parameters (e.g. industry, data, time period, etc.). Remember, you can make multiple selections by holding the Ctrl key and clicking the data or parameters you want. Then either select View or Download (for an Excel file).

Website: <http://d4.nccommerce.com/QCEWSelection.aspx>

The AccessNC Dashboard provides a link to the QCEW data through the Open Data Portal.

Website: https://accessnc.opendatasoft.com/pages/dashboard_industries_qcew/

NCWorks is another handy resource for wage and occupation data.

Website:

<https://www.ncworks.gov/vosnet/MenuLandingPage.aspx?enc=kUoPA/c81XmnhuJg+uHiHC+Loc+gNxTQtT003CzTXz0=>

4. Other States' Tax Rates

Another common question regards comparisons of tax rates across states. While the sources below can be helpful in answering general and some specific questions about other states' taxes, it's important to remember that the devil is always in the details on taxes, and there may be specific and local issues that these sources don't always take into account. As a result, it's generally a good idea to double check the information by finding the website for the taxing authority in the state you're researching.

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

Website: <https://www.taxadmin.org/current-tax-rates>

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

Website: <https://taxfoundation.org/center/state-tax-policy/>

The Council on State Taxation is also a good resource, and with Ernst & Young, it produces an annual report on tax burdens across states.

Website: <http://www.cost.org/state-tax-resources/cost-studies-articles-and-reports/>

https://www.cost.org/globalassets/cost/state-tax-resources-pdf-pages/cost-studies-articles-reports/1909-3269660_50-state-tax-2019-final.pdf

Businesses & 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 uses on a regular basis, organized into the following format:

- 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

One common request we get at LEAD is for lists of companies in a certain area, or with certain characteristics. While there are several sources for this type of information, we must note that sometimes the data are not completely reliable. While the companies that create these lists go to great lengths (and costs) to identify companies and report accurate information on them, the fact is that with different collection methodologies, the results can be varied. With that said, here are some options for generating lists of businesses.

BUSINESS SEARCH (ACCESSNC)

The AccessNC Dashboard provides a good search mechanism to find companies based on name, location, and other criteria. From the link below, click on the "Business" tile, then either "NC Quick Search" or "Advanced Search." One limitation is that the data provider only allows searching at the 4-digit NAICS level.

Website: http://accessnc.ncommerce.com/business/business_custom_search_infogroup.html

BUSINESS SEARCH (REFERENCEUSA VIA NC LIVE)

Another popular business directory is ReferenceUSA. It provides instant, real-time access to accurate, in-depth information on U.S. businesses which is available through NCLive.org. However, to access the site you must have a library card from a participating NCLive partner (e.g. through the State Library). To access, just

click on the link below and select “Business & Management” under Subjects. Then select your participating library and enter your ID number.

Website: <https://www.nclive.org/browse#main>

TOP EMPLOYERS (BY COUNTY AND STATE)

LEAD provides the Top 25 Employers by manufacturing and nonmanufacturing employers as well as by county.

Website: <https://www.nccommerce.com/lead/data-tools/industry/top-employers>

For the largest statewide (principal) employers, the Office of the State Controller provides a list in its **Comprehensive Annual Financial Report**. Just select the most recent report, and navigate to the list.

Website: <https://www.osc.nc.gov/>

COMPANY BRIEFS, REPORTS AND FILINGS

ANNUAL REPORTS

Oftentimes, the best place to find a company’s annual report is to just Google the company, find its Web page, and look for its most recent annual report there. If that doesn’t work, here are a couple other 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: <https://www.orderannualreports.com/>

AnnualReports.com is another option for annual reports. View company annual reports (and 10Ks report if available) online or select companies to order hard copy reports.

Website: annualreports.com

COMPANY PROFILES

There are many different options for finding information on specific companies, some of which require subscription services and cost a lot of money. For free and less expensive sources, here are a couple options:

Bloomberg Businessweek provides good information in a fairly easy-to-understand layout. We’ve linked directly to the company search mechanism, but you can also google the company name + Businessweek.

Website: investing.businessweek.com/research/common/symbollookup/symbollookup.asp

NCLive also connects to a source that provides company profiles. From the website below, select “Business Market Research Collection.” Then, enter the participating library and your ID number (the one catch with NCLive is that it’s only available to those with a library card). Finally, just navigate or search for the company you’re looking for.

Website: <https://www.nclive.org/browse#main>

SECURITIES FILINGS (SEC)

U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. 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. Anyone can access and download this information for free. Here you’ll find links to a complete list of filings available through EDGAR and instructions for searching the EDGAR database.

Website: www.sec.gov/edgar.shtml

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: <https://www.sosnc.gov/Corporations/>

INDUSTRY DATA (GENERAL)

We won't even touch the surface of all the sources for industry data, but here are a few good places to start:

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: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/asm.html>

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: <https://www.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. The Census Bureau provides NAICS codes searches:

Website: www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/

QUARTERLY CENSUS OF EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES (VIA LEAD'S D4)

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. LEAD's D4 system provides a simple way to create customized data. From the link below, select the geographic region you want to look at on the left, then all your other parameters (industry level, specific industry, time, etc.) in the middle. Just a reminder, you can make multiple selections by holding the Ctrl button on your keyboard while you click. Then select "View" or "Download" depending on how you want to see the data.

Website: <http://d4.nccommerce.com/QCEWSelection.aspx>

QCEW data is also available for other states and nationally at the U.S. Department of Labor (although the US DOL site can be a bit complicated to use at times).

Website: www.bls.gov/cew/

INDUSTRY DATA (SPECIFIC INDUSTRIES)

Again, there are data and research about nearly every industry imaginable, but here are a couple industries of note:

INDUSTRY REPORTS (LEAD)

LEAD produces industry specific reports from time to time, including the impact of the military on the North Carolina economy.

Website: <http://www.nccommerce.com/lead/research-publications/industry-reports>

INDUSTRY REPORTS (EDPNC)

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

Website: <https://edpnc.com/industries/>

INDUSTRY PROFILES (DUKE)

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 might be a bit dated, although some of the historical information is certainly helpful and relevant.

Website: www.soc.duke.edu/NC_GlobalEconomy/index.shtml

AGRICULTURE

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

Website: www.ncagr.gov/stats/index.htm

BANKS

Banking regulation is complicated, so finding data on the banking industry can be complicated, as well. But 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: www.nccob.org/Public/news/nrpubandresearch.aspx

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) is another one of the major national bank regulators. Among other things, it provides detailed statistics on FDIC-regulated depository institutions by state.

Website: <https://www.fdic.gov/bank/statistical/>

The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) is another major bank regulator, and it has useful data and research reports as well.

Website: www.occ.gov/

BIOTECHNOLOGY

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

Website: www.ncbiotech.org/resource-library

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: www.ncmbc.us/index.php

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: www.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: <https://dod.defense.gov/About/Military-Departments/DoD-Websites/> or

<https://archive.defense.gov/RegisteredSites/RegisteredSites.aspx> (archived)

LEAD also recently completed a review of the economic impact of the military in the state.

Website: <https://www.nccommerce.com/lead/research-publications/industry-reports>

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: <https://www.usaspending.gov/#/>

TRAVEL & TOURISM

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

Website: <https://partners.visitnc.com/research>

Of particular note, Visit North Carolina offers tourism data broken up by county and year:

Website: <https://partners.visitnc.com/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: www.sbtcd.org/services/research/

The federal Small Business Administration provides data on business size and dynamics broken out by national, state, and sub state:

Website: www.sba.gov/advocacy/849/12162

SBA provides a handy state summary for North Carolina. The most recent 2018 edition is linked below.

Website: <https://www.sba.gov/advocacy/2017-small-business-profiles-states-and-territories>

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

Website: <https://www.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, searchable by state and company, can be found at the website below:

Website: <https://www.sbir.gov/sbirsearch/award/all>

VENTURE CAPITAL

PricewaterhouseCoopers and the National Venture Capital Association provide quarterly data, broken up by state, on venture capital investment activity in the U.S.

Website: <https://www.pwcmoneytree.com/MTPublic/ns/index.jsp>

OTHER BUSINESS DATA

LICENSING (REQUIREMENTS FOR BUSINESSES)

Business Link North Carolina (BLNC) contains information on licensing and regulations questions. You can also search the business license and permit database for North Carolina. Business counselors from BLNC are available at 1-800-228-8443.

Website: <https://edpnc.com/start-or-grow-a-business/start-a-business/>

NEW BUSINESS STARTS AND FAILURES (BUSINESS DYNAMICS)

The Small Business Administration (via the Census Bureau) provides a lot of data on businesses, including data related to new business stats and failures.

Website: www.sba.gov/advocacy/849/12162

Note: This website contains a lot of data sets and can be a bit overwhelming. For the state level (and even county and Metropolitan Statistical Area level) 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 finding data related to its inspections and accident investigations.

Website: <https://www.osha.gov/oshstats/index.html>

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

Website: www.nclabor.com/osha/consult/consult.htm

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 here is a brief summary for North Carolina: www.eia.gov/state/analysis.cfm?sid=NC.
Website: www.eia.gov/state/seds/

The Division of Energy, Mineral, and Land Resources at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, may be able to provide information and research regarding North Carolina-specific issues.
Website: <https://www.nc.gov/agency/energy-mineral-and-land-resources-division>

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. While the first link below provides a ton of data regarding electricity production in the U.S., the second provides good, simple state-level energy profiles, including North Carolina:

Website (extensive): www.eia.gov/electricity/data.cfm
Website (state summaries): www.eia.gov/state/

NATURAL GAS

The Energy Information Administration is the place to go for data on average commercial, industrial and residential natural gas use and prices. The second link below takes you directly to data by state.

Website: www.eia.gov/naturalgas/
Website (prices by location): www.eia.gov/naturalgas/data.cfm#prices

UTILITIES REGULATION

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

Website: <https://www.ncuc.net/>

General Economic Information

This is the “catch-all” category for data and resources that aren’t quite workforce focused, not quite industry focused, and don’t really fit in any of the other categories either.

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: <https://www.bea.gov/data/gdp/gdp-state>

PRICES: CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (CPI)

The 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. The most recent data are found at:

Website: www.bls.gov/cpi/home.htm
Historical Data: <https://www.bls.gov/cpi/tables/home.htm>

BLS also produces regional CPI data, in which North Carolina is grouped with several other Southern states.
Website: <https://www.bls.gov/cpi/tables/home.htm>

PRICES: PRODUCER PRICE INDEX (PPI)

The BLS also produces the Producer Price Index, which tracks prices at a wholesale or producer level. The most recent data are found at the following. PPI is only available at the national level.

Website: www.bls.gov/ppi/

PRICES: COST OF LIVING CALCULATORS

There are many, many different cost of living calculators available online. There is no real consensus on which one is the best. 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: www.bestplaces.net/cost-of-living/

REGIONAL BUSINESS CONDITIONS

The Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond provides some good research and data covering economic issues affecting North Carolina and surrounding states. Of particular note, the Bank produces monthly snapshots of business conditions in North Carolina (along with South Carolina), plus regional surveys of business conditions in the Carolinas.

Website (Snapshots): https://www.richmondfed.org/research/regional_economy/reports/snapshot/

Website (Business Activity/Economic Conditions):

www.richmondfed.org/research/regional_economy/surveys_of_business_conditions/index.cfm

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: www.federalreserve.gov/monetarypolicy/beigebook/

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

Website: <https://www.wellsfargo.com/com/insights/economics/regional-reports>

RETAIL SALES

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

Website (Monthly): www.dornc.com/publications/monthlysales.html

Website (Annual): www.dornc.com/publications/fiscalyearsales.html

[AccessNC](http://www.accessnc.com) also provides retail sales data. Click on Demographics, then click on Area Profile, Area Type and then Area. Retail Sales in report.

Website: <https://accessnc.ncommerce.com/>

STATE RANKINGS AND COMPARISONS

[AccessNC](http://www.accessnc.com) offers a quick and easy way to compare North Carolina against any other state. From the homepage, click on Demographics. Under Report Type, then click on state to compare.

Website: <https://accessnc.ncommerce.com/>

The State Data Center also produces comparative rankings for North Carolina across a variety of metrics including: Population & Housing, Vital Statistics & Health, Social & Human Services, Education, Law Enforcement, Courts & Corrections, Environment, Recreation & Resources, Energy & Utilities, Government, Employment & Income, Business & Industry, Agriculture, and Transportation.

Website: data.osbm.state.nc.us/staterank/state_rankings.pdf

WEATHER

The North Carolina Climate Office provides climate-related services to the state, local and federal agencies, businesses and the citizens of North Carolina. Of particular note, the website provides some handy summaries of North Carolina's climate and statewide maps.

Website: www.nc-climate.ncsu.edu/climate/ncclimate.html

The Southeast Regional Climate Center at UNC-Chapel Hills also has several helpful weather-related resources. Of note is a helpful map that provides historical climate data by city:

Website: www.sercc.com/climateinfo/historical/historical_nc.html

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 only.

Website: www.census.gov/construction/bps/

HOME SALES & PRICES

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

Website (Pending Sales): <https://www.nar.realtor/research-and-statistics/housing-statistics/pending-home-sales>

Website (Existing Sales): <https://www.nar.realtor/research-and-statistics/housing-statistics/pending-home-sales>

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

Website: us.spindices.com/index-family/real-estate/sp-case-shiller

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, many different measures of housing across the country.

Website: www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs/

The Census Bureau provides a handy list of construction data available by geography.

Website: www.census.gov/econ/construction.html

HOUSING VACANCY & HOMEOWNERSHIP

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

Website: www.census.gov/housing/hvs/data/rates.html

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: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

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 subscription, but some are free. For country specific information, just browse for that country in the index linked below:

Website: www.economist.com/topics

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT (FDI)

Foreign Direct Investment is investment in an enterprise in a foreign country. Click on Investment Type: FDI in the U.S. and Data Type: Data on new FDI in the U.S. The Bureau of Economic Analysis produces this data.

Website: <https://apps.bea.gov/iTable/iTable.cfm?ReqID=2&step=1>

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

The U.S. Census Bureau produces monthly international trade data, including data at the state level. While the Census Bureau produces the data, the US Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration provides a handy tool to find and organize the exact data you're looking for.

Website: tse.export.gov/TSE/TSEhome.aspx

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 actually produced. For example, that's why Louisiana shows such 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: www.census.gov/foreign-trade/aip/elom.html

The International Trade Division in the Department of Commerce also has resources and tools that can help North Carolina businesses looking to export.

Website: <https://edpnc.com/start-or-grow-a-business/export-assistance/>

Social

CENSUS DATA

The US Census Bureau provides incredible amounts of data from the national level all the way down to neighborhoods. In addition to population data, there is business and economic data. Currently, results from the 2010 decennial census are available.

Website: <http://www.census.gov/>

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

Website: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/nc,US/PST045217>

American FactFinder provides quick access to relevant data — just type in the geography you want to examine, and select the data you want.

Website: <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

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: <https://www.census.gov/acs/www/>

LEAD's own [AccessNC](#) is another way to obtain Census data. Categories include education, housing, income, population, quality of life, taxes, commercial retail, and consumer expenditures. To retrieve data from the

AccessNC homepage, first click on Demographics, then the geography you want to look at by selecting the appropriate tab (County, Region, or State).

Website: <https://accessnc.ncommerce.com/>

CRIME

The NC State Bureau of Investigation compiles crime statistics.

Website: <https://www.ncsbi.gov/Services/SBI-Statistics>

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has compilations of crime statistics for all 50 states as published by the FBI.

Website: www.fbi.gov/stats-services/crimestats

AccessNC is another way to obtain crime statistics by state and by county. To retrieve data from the AccessNC homepage, first click on Community Demographics. Then select the geography you want to look at by choosing the appropriate tab (Custom County, Region, or State). Next, double click each + sign down under the “Crime” category down to the data you want, select the report format, and finally “Run Report.”

Website: <https://accessnc.ncommerce.com/>

EDUCATION

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/

NC Public Schools provides a great deal of information on North Carolina public schools available on the Department of Public Instruction website. Find Data and Statistics, Testing and Accountability Results, and Current and Historical SAT Scores by County.

Website: www.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: www.ncdnpe.org/

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

Website: www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/

UNC System: the reports and publications page, which includes information on enrollment, and other information, is linked below. Of note, the most recent Statistical Abstract of Higher Education in North Carolina might be a particular useful resource.

Website: www.northcarolina.edu/reports/index.php

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 level.

Website: www.bea.gov/regional/bearfacts/

AccessNC also provides a variety of income measures at the state and county levels. To retrieve data from the AccessNC homepage, first click on Community Demographics. Then, select the geography you want to look at by choosing the appropriate tab (Custom County, Region, or State). Next, double click each + sign under the “Income” category to the data you want, select the report format, and finally “Run Report.”

Website: <https://accessnc.ncommerce.com/>

POPULATION, MIGRATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

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/

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: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045217>

[AccessNC](#) also provides tools to pull population data. To obtain data from the [AccessNC](#) homepage, first click on Community Demographics. Then, select the geography you want to look at by selecting the appropriate tab (Custom County, Region, or State). Next, double click each + sign under the “Population” category to the data you want, select the report format, and finally “Run Report.”

Website: <https://accessnc.nccommerce.com/>

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: https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/saipe/saipe.html?s_appName=saipe&map_yearSelector=2016&map_geoSelector=aa_c

[AccessNC](#) also provides data on poverty at the state and county levels. From the [AccessNC](#) homepage, first click on Community Demographics. Then, select the geography you want to look at by choosing the appropriate tab (Custom County, Region, or State). Next, double click each + sign under the “Income,” then “Poverty” categories to the data you want, select the report format, and finally “Run Report.”

Website: <https://accessnc.nccommerce.com/>

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): <https://www.fitchratings.com/site/home>

Website (Moody’s): <https://www.moodys.com/>

Website (S&P): www.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: www.nctreasurer.com/slg/Pages/Local-Debt.aspx

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: www.nccommerce.com/research-publications/incentive-reports/county-tier-designations

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: <https://deq.nc.gov/permits-regulations/express-permitting>

INCENTIVES

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

Website: <https://edpnc.com/relocate-or-expand/incentives/>

The Department of Revenue provides data on the use of specific economic incentives. The reports are linked here:

Website: <https://www.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, and license and fees.

Website: <https://nccareers.org/oclicenses/>

TAXES

Questions about taxes are one of the most frequent questions we get at LEAD. While there are many resources out there that can help answer questions about both North Carolina taxes, and how our state compares to others, here are what we think are the most helpful resources.

The North Carolina Department of Revenue has all the information you would ever need on taxes in North Carolina. Here's our top DOR links to get the data you need:

- **Reports and Statistics:** <https://www.ncdor.gov/reports-and-statistics>
- **Property Tax Rates:** <https://www.ncdor.gov/taxes/north-carolinas-property-tax-system/property-tax-rates>
- **Sales Tax Rates:** <https://www.ncdor.gov/taxes-forms/sales-and-use-tax/sales-and-use-tax-rates-other-information>
- **Incentives:** <https://www.ncdor.gov/reports-and-statistics/other-credits-and-incentives-reports>

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

Website: <https://www.taxadmin.org/research-and-tax-rates>

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

Website: <https://taxfoundation.org/center/state-tax-policy/>

The Council on State Taxation is also a good resource, and with Ernst & Young, it produces an annual report on tax burdens across states.

Website: <https://www.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: www.ncrb.org/ncrb/

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

Website: www.wcrinet.org/benchmarks.html

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: <https://www.oregon.gov/dCBS/cost/Pages/report-resouces.aspx>

Transportation

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: <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

TRANSPORTATION (GENERAL)

The North Carolina Department of Transportation provides various resources related to transportation in the state. The Newsroom page, linked below, may have some useful data, facts, and maps.

Website: <https://www.ncdot.gov/news/Pages/default.aspx>

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.

Website: <https://nccareers.org/>

LABOR FORCE

The Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program provides labor force information along with unemployment data. The easiest way to access that data is through LEAD's D4 system. Simply choose your geography on the left, select the data and time periods in the center (remember, you can make multiple selections by holding the Ctrl button while clicking), then either Standard or Data Table View, or Download.

Website: <https://d4.nccommerce.com/LausSelection.aspx>

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

Website: www.bls.gov/lau/

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

Website: <https://www.ncworks.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx>

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: www.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.

Website: www.nccommerce.com/workforce/businesses/warn-information

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: www.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 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program of the Center for Economic Studies at the U.S. Census Bureau. From these data, the program creates statistics on employment, earnings, and job flows at detailed levels of geography and industry and for different demographic groups. In addition, the LEHD program uses these data to create partially synthetic data on workers' residential patterns. There's also a handy extraction tool for creating customized data that can be downloaded.

Website: lehd.ces.census.gov/

Website (Extraction tool): <https://ledextract.ces.census.gov/static/data.html>

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (LOCAL AREA UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS "LAUS")

There are multiple ways to access state and local unemployment rates.

LEAD's D4 allows users to create customized data sets for unemployment data at the state, county, and sub county levels. Click on LAUS, then select your region on the left (state, county, MSA), and your year and time periods (multiple periods can be selected by holding Ctrl and clicking on the time period). Then, select Standard View or Download to get your data.

Website: <https://d4.nccommerce.com/LausSelection.aspx>

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

Website: www.bls.gov/lau/

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

Website:

https://www.ncworks.gov/vosnet/dashboards/defaultana.aspx?menuid=MENU_START_PAGE_DASHBOARD_ANA&pu=1&plang=E

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

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

Website (Home Page): <https://des.nc.gov/DES>

Website (General Information): <https://des.nc.gov/DES/Static?page=faqMain#UIBenefits>

The U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration provides revenues and covered employment for all states. Revenues divided by covered employment derive the average annual cost per employee.

Website: ows.doleta.gov/unemploy/content/data.asp

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: www.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: www.nlr.gov/

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

Website: www.nrtw.org/rtws.htm

WAGES (BY INDUSTRY — QCEW)

The Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) is the best source of information on wages, separated by industry. Both LEAD’s D4 and [AccessNC](#) systems can provide the data.

For D4, from the homepage, first select “QCEW” on the top. Then, select your geography on the left, then your other parameters (e.g. industry, data, time period, etc.). Remember, you can make multiple selections by holding the Ctrl key and clicking the data or parameters you want. Then, either select View or Download (for an Excel file).

Website: <https://d4.nccommerce.com/QCEWSelection.aspx>

[AccessNC](#) provides the same QCEW data, but just in a different format. Click on Demographics, then on Report Type, Area Type and Area.

Website: <https://accessnc.nccommerce.com/>

NCWorks is another option for both QCEW data and other labor market information by industry.

Website:

<https://www.ncworks.gov/vosnet/MenuLandingPage.aspx?enc=kUoPA/c81XmnhuJg+uHiHGb4kv0dlrj8UMaho1yLoSU=>

WAGES (BY OCCUPATION — OES)

The Occupational Employment and Wages program is the best source of information on wages separated by occupation. D4 is one of the best ways to access the data. From the link below, just select the geography on the left, then the occupation and time period in the middle (reminder: you can make multiple selections by holding down the Ctrl key and clicking). Then, either View or Download the data. Please note that OES data is not a time series and may not be useful for comparing one-time period against another. Don’t hesitate to contact LEAD if you have any questions on how to use this data.

Website: <https://d4.nccommerce.com/OESSelection.aspx>

NCWorks is another good option for finding OES data.

Website:

https://www.ncworks.gov/vosnet/dashboards/defaultana.aspx?menuid=MENU_START_PAGE_DASHBOARD_ANA&pu=1&plang=E

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 please feel free to ask us any questions about how to use the data presented here, what limitations it might have, and what might be some alternative strategies. We're always happy to help.

INDEX – A TO Z

- Agriculture, 9
- Air Travel – Deplanements and Enplanements, 19
- Annual Reports, 7
- Annual Survey of Manufacturers (U.S. Census Bureau), 8
- Banks, 9
- Biotechnology, 9
- Bond Ratings, 17
- Building Permits (Residential), 14
- Business Search ([AccessNC](#)), 6
- Business Search (Intellect via NC Live), 6
- Businesses & Industry, 6
- Census Data, 15
- Commuting Patterns, 19
- Company Briefs, Reports and Filings, 7
- Company Lists and Directories, 6
- Company Profiles, 7
- Country Profiles, 14
- County Tier Designations, 17
- Crime, 16
- Economic Census (U.S. Census Bureau), 8
- Education, 16
- Electricity, 12
- Energy & Utilities, 11
- Energy (General), 11
- Environmental Permitting, 17
- Experts on the North Carolina Economy, 22
- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), 15
- General Economic Information, 12
- Gross State Product, 12
- Home Sales & Prices, 14
- Housing & Construction, 14
- Housing & Construction (General), 14
- Housing Vacancy & Homeownership, 14
- Incentives, 18
- Income, 16
- Industry Classification (North American Industrial Classification System – NAICS), 8
- Industry Data (General), 8
- Industry Data (Specific Industries), 9
- Industry Profiles (Duke), 9
- Industry Reports (LEAD), 9
- International, 14
- International Trade, 15
- Labor Force, 19
- Largest Employers (by County and State), 6
- Layoffs and Closings, 19
- LEAD’s “Favorite” Sources for Data, 24
- License Requirements (Individuals), 18
- Licensing (Requirements for Businesses), 11
- Military, 9
- Military & Government Contracting, 10
- Natural Gas, 12
- New Business Starts and Failures (Business Dynamics), 11
- Occupation Classification (Standard Occupational Classification), 19
- Other Business Data, 11
- Population, Migration & Demographics, 17
- Poverty Rates, 17
- Prices: Consumer Price Index (CPI), 12
- Prices: Cost of Living Calculators, 12
- Prices: Producer Price Index (PPI), 12
- Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (via LEAD’s D4), 8
- Quarterly Workforce Indicators (Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics), 20
- Regional Business Conditions, 13
- Retail Sales, 13
- SBIR/STTR Awards, 10
- Securities Filings (SEC), 7
- Small Business, 10
- Small Business (General), 10
- Social, 15
- State Corporate Filings, 8
- State Government & Policy, 17
- State Rankings and Comparisons, 13
- Taxes, 18
- Transportation, 19
- Transportation (General), 19
- Travel & Tourism, 10
- Unemployment Insurance, 20
- Unemployment Rate (Local Area Unemployment Statistics “LAUS”), 20
- Unions, 21
- Utilities Regulation, 12
- Venture Capital, 11
- Wages (By Industry — QCEW), 21
- Wages (By Occupation — OES), 21
- Weather, 13
- Worker Safety (OSHA), 11
- Workers Compensation, 18
- Workforce, 19