Glossary of Terms

Affirmative Action

A program that became law with the passage of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972. It requires employers, labor unions, employment agencies, and labor-management apprenticeship programs to make an affirmative effort to eliminate discrimination against, and increase employment of, females and minorities.

Applicant

A person who registers with a local Employment Security office to seek employment, obtain employability development services, and/or file for unemployment compensation. Applicants remain "active" until they are placed in a permanent job or in training or as long as they continue to actively seek services from a local Employment Security office.

Average Weekly Earnings of Production Workers (Current Employment Statistics)

Average earnings of production workers in Manufacturing during the survey week, including overtime, paid vacation, and sick leave.

Average Weekly Wage (Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

Total wages paid by employers divided by average employment and further divided by the number of weeks in the reference period.

Benchmark

The process of adjusting statistics as more complete data become available. Estimates are calculated using a sample of the total population. Therefore, benchmarking allows for correction of estimating errors. This periodic adjustment is a benchmark revision. The point-in-time for the availability of more complete data is the benchmark date. Data series are commonly referenced by their benchmark date, e.g., "data based on a March 2011 benchmark."

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

The U.S. government's principal data-gathering agency in the field of labor economics. The agency collects and analyzes data on manpower and labor requirements, the labor force, employment and unemployment, hours of work, wages and other compensation, prices, living conditions, labor-management relations, productivity, technological developments, occupational safety and health, etc.

Business Cycle

A pattern of fluctuation in the economy characterized by alternate expansion and contraction.

Civilian Noninstitutional Population

The portion of the population age sixteen and older, excluding members of the armed forces on active duty, and persons who are institutionalized.

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Claimant

An individual who has filed a request for determination of unemployment benefit eligibility.

Consumer Price Index (CPI)

An index used to measure changes in the cost of a market basket of selected goods and services. Often the reference for cost of living adjustments in wages.

Continued Weeks Claimed

A request for payment of benefits for a week of unemployment after the week has occurred. A claimant cannot file for a week of unemployment until that week has passed.

Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA)

A geographic entity associated with at least one core of 10,000 or more population, plus adjacent territory that has a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured by commuting patterns. Furthermore, in New England, CBSA are defined as MetroNECTA and MicroNECTA. CBSA are based on population and commuting patterns from the U.S. Decennial Census.

Covered Employment

The number of employees covered by New Hampshire's unemployment insurance laws.

Current Employment Statistics (CES)

Estimates of nonfarm wage and salary employment and production workers' hours and earnings by industry. The estimates are produced monthly in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics as part of a nationwide program for each state and MetroNECTA from a sample of employing establishments.

Current Population Survey (CPS)

A household survey conducted monthly by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Discouraged Worker

People who want to work but have made no attempt to find work in the last four weeks because they believed that no jobs were available to them or there were no jobs for which they would qualify. Discouraged workers are not counted among the unemployed or as part of the labor force.

Durable Goods

Items with a normal life expectancy of three years or more. Expenditures for durable goods are generally postponable. Consequently, durable goods sales are the most volatile component of consumer expenditures. Common examples of durable goods items are automobiles, furniture, household appliances, and electronics.

Econometric Model

A set of related equations used to analyze economic data through mathematical and statistical techniques.

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Economic Indicators

Data that represent changes in economic conditions. There are three major groups of economic indicators that demonstrate a consistent relationship to the timing of general business fluctuations — leading, coincident, and lagging.

Leading indicators: Signal in advance a change in the basic pattern of economic performance. Examples are average weekly hours for production workers, average weekly initial claims for unemployment insurance, new private building permits, and common stock prices. These indicators move ahead of turns in the business cycle. For this reason, they provide significant clues to future shifts in the general direction of business activity.

Coincident indicators: Measure current economic performance. Their movements coincide roughly with total economic activity. Employees on nonagricultural payroll, industrial production, and manufacturing and trade sales are examples.

Lagging indicators: Move up or down after general business activity has altered its course. Examples are average duration of unemployment, average prime rate, and consumer price index for services.

Employed Persons

Those individuals who are 16 years of age and over who: (1) worked for pay any time during the week which includes the 12th day of the month; (2) worked unpaid for 15 hours or more in a family-owned business; or (3) were temporarily absent from their jobs due to illness, bad weather, vacation, labor dispute, or personal reasons. Excluded are persons whose only activity consists of work around their own house and volunteer work for religious, charitable, and similar organizations.

Establishments

An economic unit that produces goods or provides services, generally at a single location, and engages in one type of economic activity. Examples are stores, factories, farms, salons, etc.

Foreign Labor Certification

A program that allows an employer to employ a foreign worker in the U.S. either on a temporary or permanent basis. It is the responsibility of the State Workforce Agency to determine the prevailing wage rate for the occupation in the area of intended employment.

Full-Time Employment

By Bureau of Labor Statistics' definition, those working 35 or more hours per week are considered full-time workers.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by State

A measurement of a state's output; it is the sum of value added from all industries in the state. GDP by state is the state counterpart to the Nation's gross domestic product (GDP).

GDP by state for the nation is a different measure than U.S. GDP for the following reasons: GDP by state excludes and GDP includes the compensation of federal civilian and military personnel stationed abroad and government consumption of fixed capital for military structures located abroad and for military equipment, except office equipment; and GDP by state and GDP have different revision schedules.

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Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

The market value of goods and services produced by labor and property in the United States, regardless of nationality; GDP replaced gross national product (GNP) as the primary measure of U.S. production in 1991.

High Tech Industries

High technology occupations are not a standard occupational group, but a mix of occupations from four different job families. According to a 2005 description of high tech employment from BLS, technology-oriented occupations are in the science, engineering and technician fields.

Hispanic

Persons who identify themselves as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or of other Hispanic origin or descent. In U.S. Census data, persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Index Number

A measure of the relative changes occurring in a series of values compared with a base period. The base period usually equals 100, and any variations from it represent percentages of change. By use of an index number, volumes of data can be combined and weighted into one number relative to the base value.

Industry

A general term for a distinct group of economic enterprises, who produce similar products or provide similar services. Currently, business activity is defined by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

Initial Claim

A claim for unemployment benefits filed (1) to request a determination of entitlement to and eligibility for compensation, or (2) to begin a second or subsequent period of unemployment benefits within a benefit year after intervening employment.

Job Bank

A computerized system which provides rapid dissemination of job orders throughout a network of employment service local offices. New Hampshire's job bank is called the Job Match System (JMS).

Labor Force

That portion of the civilian noninstitutional population age sixteen and older which is employed, or unemployed and actively seeking employment.

Labor Force Participation Rate

The percentage of the civilian noninstitutional population age sixteen or older that is working or looking for work.

Labor Market Area (LMA)

A Labor Market Area is an economically integrated region within which workers may readily change jobs without changing place of residence.

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Labor Market/Workforce Information

Data on a broad range of topics including labor force, employment by industry and occupation, unemployment, population, earnings, wages, and hours worked.

Labor Surplus Area

A civil jurisdiction with an average unemployment rate during the two previous calendar years at least twenty percent above the unemployment rate for the U.S. and Puerto Rico during the same two year period.

Location Quotient

Measures an area's industry or occupation concentration relative to a larger area.

Mass Layoff Statistics (MLS)

The MLS program identifies mass layoffs and plant closings which affect more than 50 workers from a single firm.

Mean (average)

Obtained by adding all the observed values together and dividing by the total number of observed values.

Median

The midpoint in a series of numbers ranked from lowest to highest. The median is not influenced by extreme values in the group.

Minimum Wage

Under federal law, the lowest hourly wage allowed. In New Hampshire, the hourly minimum wage is currently equal to the Federal Government's minimum wage. There are exceptions to the minimum wage provisions of the law as stated in the Fair Labor Standards Act. A few examples are tipped employees, employees under 16 years of age, or domestic labor.

Minority

Generally a person identified as a member of a race other than Caucasian and/or a person of Hispanic origin.

New England City and Town Areas (NECTA)

Core Based Statistical Areas specifically designated for the New England States. These areas are delineated as either Metropolitan or Micropolitan NECTA. A Metropolitan NECTA is based on urbanized areas of 50,000 or more population and a Micropolitan NECTA is based on a population of 10,000 to 50,000. A NECTA Division is a sub-division of a large Metropolitan NECTA, one with a population of at least 2.5 million, and has a total population of at least 100,000.

Nominal

Economic values expressed in current prices. A general increase in prices will cause nominal prices to rise even if there is no real change in the value.

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Nondurable Goods

Items that generally last for less than three years. Nondurable goods items are generally purchased when needed. Common examples of nondurable goods items are food, beverages, apparel, and gasoline.

Nonfarm Employment (CES program)

Estimated number of persons employed by place of work, during the week including the 12th. It does not include the self-employed, unpaid family workers, or agricultural workers. It does, however, include many of those omitted from covered employment. This is a consistent economic time series allowing comparisons of different labor markets over an extended period of time.

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)

A taxonomy that groups business establishments into industries based on the primary economic activity. NAICS uses a six-digit code to identify over 1,170 specific industries.

Occupation

A unique set of tasks, skills, and abilities associated with a worker performing a job. Workers performing essentially the same tasks are considered to be in the same occupation, regardless of the employer.

Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS)

A semi-annual survey of business establishments that collects employment and wage data for occupations. Products from these data include occupational staffing patterns.

Occupational Staffing Patterns

Describes an industry in terms of its occupational distribution. For example, an occupational staffing pattern for the electrical machinery industry would indicate how many of the workers in the industry were employed as electrical engineers, electronics technicians, assemblers, etc.

Occupational Information Network (O*NET)

A comprehensive database of worker attributes and job characteristics, providing a common language for defining and describing occupations. This classification system is the replacement for the now outdated Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT).

Part-Time Employment

By Bureau of Labor Statistics' definition, those working fewer than 35 hours per week are considered part-time.

Personal Income

The current income received by all residents from all sources, including wages and salary disbursements, other labor income, proprietors' income, rental income, interest, dividends, and transfer payments less personal contributions for social insurance.

Sample

A finite part of a statistical population chosen to be representative of the whole population. The properties of the sample are studied to gain information about the whole population.

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Sampling Error

An error arising because it is not statistically possible, short of a census, to select a sample that corresponds perfectly to the population from which it is selected. As the size of a sample increases, the magnitude of the sampling error decreases. Sampling errors differ from other kinds of statistical errors in that they occur at random and are unbiased. Non-sampling errors, on the other hand, are errors that can be attributed to mistakes in data collection, tabulation, analysis, etc.

Seasonal Adjustments

A process for minimizing the effects of a regular pattern that occurs over the course of a year. Monthly data are adjusted to remove the effects of seasonal events, such as holiday shopping, summer vacations, and typical weather patterns, so that non-seasonal economic changes can be observed.

Shift-Share

This technique attempts to account for differences between a given industry's local growth rate and the reference region's growth rate that results in the shift of that industry's employment into or out of a region.

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Codes

A taxonomy for classifying all occupations in the economy, including private, public, and military occupations.

Unemployed

Persons who are not working but are willing and available to work, and have been engaged in a job-seeking activity during the last four weeks.

Unemployment Rate

The number of unemployed persons divided by the total number of persons in the labor force, expressed as a percent.

Workforce/Labor Market Information

Data on a broad range of topics including labor force, employment by industry and occupation, unemployment, population, earnings, wages, and hours worked.