Census Bureau Experiences in Obtaining State UI and SNAP Data

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June 1, 2016
Building data systems by merging administrative and survey data: The LEHD program at US Census Bureau

An innovative federal statistical program, collecting existing data and...

..linking it together to provide new information sources at low cost

New linked national jobs data for the U.S.
The LEHD data:

**Firm data:** survey data on firms from both Census economic programs and state-provided QCEW.

**Jobs data:** administrative data on jobs from state unemployment insurance systems. Key record for linking firm and person data.

**Person data:** demographics of workers sourced from mix of Census survey and SSA and IRS administrative data.

Linked employer-employee microdata

New public use statistics tabulated from linked frame
How the data are brought together:

Unique state/federal data sharing partnership

- 49 states (& DC) share unemployment insurance wage records and QCEW data with Census
- Census LEHD staff links administrative data from state and federal sources with survey data, produces new statistics from the linked data

Advantages:

- Leverage existing survey data with administrative data allows production of new statistics at low cost with no additional respondent burden

Challenges:

- Cleaning and linking data across various sources
- Partnerships with other agencies can end (WY recently withdrew), threatening the viability of the statistical program
Social welfare program data

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Low income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP)
Pursuing social welfare data

... like LEHD

- Pursuing agreements with each state for each program
- Steady progress, from 1 agreement in 2013 to 14 today
- Delivering statistical products to states

... unlike LEHD

- No federal collection that compels standardization within state data systems
- Offering states reimbursement for data extraction
- Disinterest and distrust from some states
State program data acquisition status

- Arizona – WIC
- Colorado – SNAP, TANF, WIC, LEAP
- Florida – SNAP, TANF
- Hawaii – SNAP
- Illinois – SNAP
- Kentucky – SNAP, TANF
- Maryland – SNAP, TANF
- Nevada – SNAP, TANF, WIC
- New Jersey – SNAP, TANF
- New York – SNAP, TANF
- Oregon – SNAP
- Tennessee – SNAP, TANF
- Virginia – SNAP
- Wisconsin – TANF

Checked boxes indicate that the state has delivered data. CO and NV have delivered data for some but not all programs.