

Regional Economic Accounts Directorate

Potential Uses of BEA's Prototype Estimates of GDP by Metropolitan Area

BEA's prototype statistics on GDP by metropolitan area can be used to answer a variety of questions, and also to inform business and policy decisions. The following are just some potential questions/decisions that these prototype data can address:

What are some of the more important questions that these data can answer?

- What is the size of a metropolitan area's economy?
- Is a metropolitan area's economy growing or declining?
- What industries are driving a metropolitan area's economic growth?
- How does the growth in one metropolitan area's economy compare with growth in other metropolitan areas, with the state, with the Nation?
- What has been the trend in economic growth over time in a metropolitan area's economy?

What are some important business or policy decisions that these data can inform?

- Metropolitan Councils of Governments often prepare assessments of future economic growth in their metropolitan areas. These data can show which industries in the area are the largest, whether they are fast- or slow-growing, whether they are traditionally high- or low-wage industries, and whether the area's share of fast-growing industries is increasing.
- As the population in the Lakeland, FL metropolitan area has aged, has the growth in housing, health care and other social services supporting the elderly kept pace with the aging of the population?
- A European machine tool manufacturing company which sells primarily to auto manufacturing firms is considering building a new plant in some metropolitan area in the U.S. It wants to be near its suppliers and its potential market. In which U.S. metropolitan areas are input suppliers and automobile manufacturers located? Are these industries growing or declining?
- A temporary help agency is considering locating in one of several metropolitan areas in the south. It specializes in certain service sector activities. How does growth compare in various service industries in the metropolitan areas it is considering?
- The Mayor of Houston, Texas, has been asked by the Federal government to provide an assessment of the potential economic impacts of a terrorist attack on the Port of Houston. In order to assess the total impact, he needs to know the total size of his economy. GDP for Houston is the most comprehensive measure of economic activity for the area.