



EPI'S ECONOMYTRACK.ORG OFFERS EXCLUSIVE DATA, TOOLS FOR DECODING ECONOMIC DATA AND TRENDS

For anyone who's ever felt baffled by the twists and turns of the economy and has wished for a one-stop website to help make sense of it all, the gift-giving season has arrived early. The Economic Policy Institute's new interactive website www.economytrack.org combines the latest economic data with historic, demographic, and geographic information into an easy-to-use package where site users can find and combine the information they are most interested in.

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Visitors to Economy Track will find the most up-to-date figures on key measures of economic health. These basic facts - about unemployment, job growth or losses, GDP growth, and other topics - are updated whenever new government reports are issued. In addition, the site also includes unique data calculated by EPI economists from government sources such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Census Bureau.

Among the data available only through EPI are, for example, breakdowns of underemployment by race and education levels; unemployment data by education going back to 1979 and by occupation to the early '70s; and EPI's widely cited calculation of how many job seekers there are for every job opening. All these series are seasonally adjusted, so appropriate comparisons can be made across this downturn and to other downturns. All of the underlying data are available for media that want to generate their own charts.

"There is an urgent need to help people understand what's happening in the economy, and Economy Track was created to address that need," explained Lawrence Mishel, EPI's president. "Economy Track isn't just Econ 101, though. We designed the site to be useful for people with a broad range of experience and understanding. It has something for almost everyone, from beginners who may just want the basic facts, to journalists who need to check a number quickly or fish for story ideas, to people who want to delve deeper to educate themselves more broadly about economic trends."

On the EconomyTrack.org site, a visitor starts out by choosing from among the three general categories of information:

1. **Jobs and Employment**, for information on employment, unemployment, underemployment, job growth or losses, and other related topics.
2. **Economic Activity**, which includes data on the growth or contraction of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP), a broad measure of economic output and of capacity utilization (which measures how much we are producing compared to how much we *could be* producing).

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3. **States**, where visitors can use an interactive map to pull down current labor market data for each state (including overall unemployment rates and breakouts for different groups).

Next, the visitor opens one of the basic graphs and uses the website's interactivity to explore each kind of data in greater depth and to generate their own custom-made graphics by selecting or deselecting different subcategories of data. On the unemployment graph, for example, the site user can compare unemployment rates in different recessions for different groups of people by race, gender, education level or occupation. The two sub-tabs enable visitors to compare different groups of people within any recession or to compare the impact of different recessions on any group of people.

And for the visitor who wants to know more, the site includes links to more in-depth data and analysis to answer their questions. For each chart, a "See the data" link leads to the spreadsheets behind the graph, while other links connect to EPI publications and analysis related to each topic.

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The Economic Policy Institute (EPI) is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank that researches the impact of economic trends and policies on working people in the United States and around the world. EPI's mission is to inform people and empower them to seek solutions that will ensure broadly shared prosperity and opportunity.