

Lowndes County by the Numbers

*How Do We Compare With Peer
and Aspirant Communities?*



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*This report has been prepared for the Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce by the Center
for Business and Economic Research at Valdosta State University.*

Establishing a plan for economic success and growth requires an unbiased knowledge of a community's endowments and economic indicators. While community endowments are the unique characteristics that arise from location and geography and therefore are not likely to change, economic indicators such as demographics and labor market structure can be cultivated and enhanced in ways to improve the economic growth and prosperity of a community. Progress toward achieving these desired outcomes can only be assessed by comparing oneself to peer and aspirant communities. This report identifies the peer and aspirant communities for Lowndes County and compares economic indicators that measure the strengths and opportunities for this community.

The purpose of the report is to provide

- A collection of data to assess the economic performance of Lowndes County as benchmarked against peer and aspirant communities. The quantitative data allows for an objective assessment.
- A comparison of benchmarks as general economic conditions change over time. This allows for assessing whether or not incremental improvements keep pace or exceed the peer and aspirant communities.
- A foundation for developing strategic planning and growth strategies for the Lowndes County community.

Peer and Aspirant Communities

The primary counties of 104 Metropolitan Statistical Areas covering 11 states in the Southeastern region of the United States were considered as potential peer and aspirant communities for Lowndes County. Based upon economic, geographic, and demographic similarities, 14 peer and aspirant communities emerged as benchmark communities for Lowndes County.

Benchmarking allows for a "snapshot" comparison of communities as well as provides for an "across time" comparison of changes over time. Benchmarking using data provides an unbiased means of assessing economic progress and shortfalls.



Peer and Aspirant Community Descriptions

Houston County, Alabama, located in southeast Alabama along the Florida border, has a population of just over 100,000 residents. Although it does not have direct interstate access, Houston is bisected by U.S. highways 84 and 231. Houston is home to a branch of Troy University and a community college. Major industries include agriculture, aerospace, distribution, retail, and advanced technology.

Lee County, Alabama, located in east central Alabama along the Georgia border, has a population of over 135,000 residents. I-85 and three U.S. highways crisscross the county. Lee is home to Auburn University and a community college. Major industries include high-tech manufacturing, education, research firms, and retail.

Morgan County, Alabama, located in north central Alabama along the Tennessee River, has a population of over 115,000 residents. Morgan is a transportation hub with access to I-65, two U.S. highways, two railways, and a river port. Morgan is home to Redstone Arsenal U.S. Army post. Major industries include high-tech manufacturing, distribution, retail, and tourism.

Clarke County, Georgia, located in northeast Georgia, has a population of over 115,000 residents. Although it does not have direct interstate access, Clarke is bisected by U.S. Routes 441 and 29. Clarke is home to the University of Georgia and a technical college. Major industries include research and development, education, retail, publishing, and tourism.

Floyd County, Georgia, located in northwest Georgia along the Alabama border, has a population of nearly 100,000 residents. Although it does not have direct interstate access, Floyd is bisected by U.S. Routes 441 and 27. Floyd is home to Berry College, Shorter College and two two-year colleges. Major industries include healthcare, technology, tourism, education, and manufacturing.

Houston County, Georgia, located in central Georgia, has a population of over 135,000 residents. Houston is at the crossroads of Georgia with direct access to I-75 and several major state and U.S. roadways. Houston is home to Robins Air Force Base and a two-year college. Major industries include technology, aviation, retail, and tourism.

Lowndes County, Georgia, located in south central Georgia along the Florida border, has a population of over 105,000 residents. Lowndes has direct access to I-75 and several major U.S. and state roadways. Lowndes is home to Moody Air Force Base, Valdosta State University, and two two-year colleges. Major industries include healthcare, education, retail, and leisure & hospitality services.

Warren County, Kentucky, located in south central Kentucky near the Tennessee border, has a population of over 105,000 residents. Warren has direct access to I-65 and several major U.S. and state roadways. Warren is home to Western Kentucky University and a technical college. Major industries include high-tech manufacturing, healthcare, technology, education, and leisure & hospitality services.

Ouachita Parish, Louisiana, located in north central Louisiana, has a population of over 150,000 residents. Ouachita has direct access to I-20 and several major U.S. and state roadways. Ouachita is home to the University of Louisiana at Monroe and Louisiana Delta Community College. Major industries include plastics, paper and wood, telecommunications, insurance, and healthcare.

Rapides Parrish, Louisiana, located in central Louisiana, has a population of over 130,000. Rapides has direct access to I-49, several major U.S. and state roadways, and a river port. Rapides is home to Louisiana State University at Alexandria and Southern-Baptist affiliated Louisiana College. Major industries include manufacturing, distribution, and healthcare.

Forrest County, Mississippi, located in southeast Mississippi, has a population of over 80,000 residents. Forrest has direct access to I-59 and several major U.S. and state roadways. Forrest is home to the University of Southern Mississippi, William Carey University, and a two-year college. Major industries include manufacturing, education, and healthcare.

Nash County, North Carolina, located in northeast North Carolina, has a population of nearly 95,000 residents. Nash has direct access to I-95 and U.S. Highways 64 and 301. Nash is home to North Carolina Wesleyan College and a community college. Major industries include advanced manufacturing, software and information technology, bio-pharmaceuticals, and financial services.

Wayne County, North Carolina, located in central North Carolina, has a population of over 110,000 residents. Although it does not have direct interstate access, Wayne is bisected by U.S. Highway 70 and several major state highways. Wayne is home to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, Mount Olive College and a community college. Major industries include manufacturing, agriculture, and healthcare.

Florence County, South Carolina, located in eastern South Carolina, has a population of over 130,000 residents. Florence has direct access to I-95 and I-20. Florence is home to Francis Marion University and a technical college. Major industries include manufacturing, healthcare, pharmaceutical, financial services, and distribution.

Montgomery County, Tennessee, located in north central Tennessee along the Kentucky border, has a population of over 160,000 residents. Montgomery has direct access to I-24 and several major U.S. and state roadways. Montgomery is home to Austin Peay State University and neighbor to Fort Campbell Army Base located in Kentucky. Major industries include technology, manufacturing, printing & publishing, and consulting & professional services.

Economic Indicators

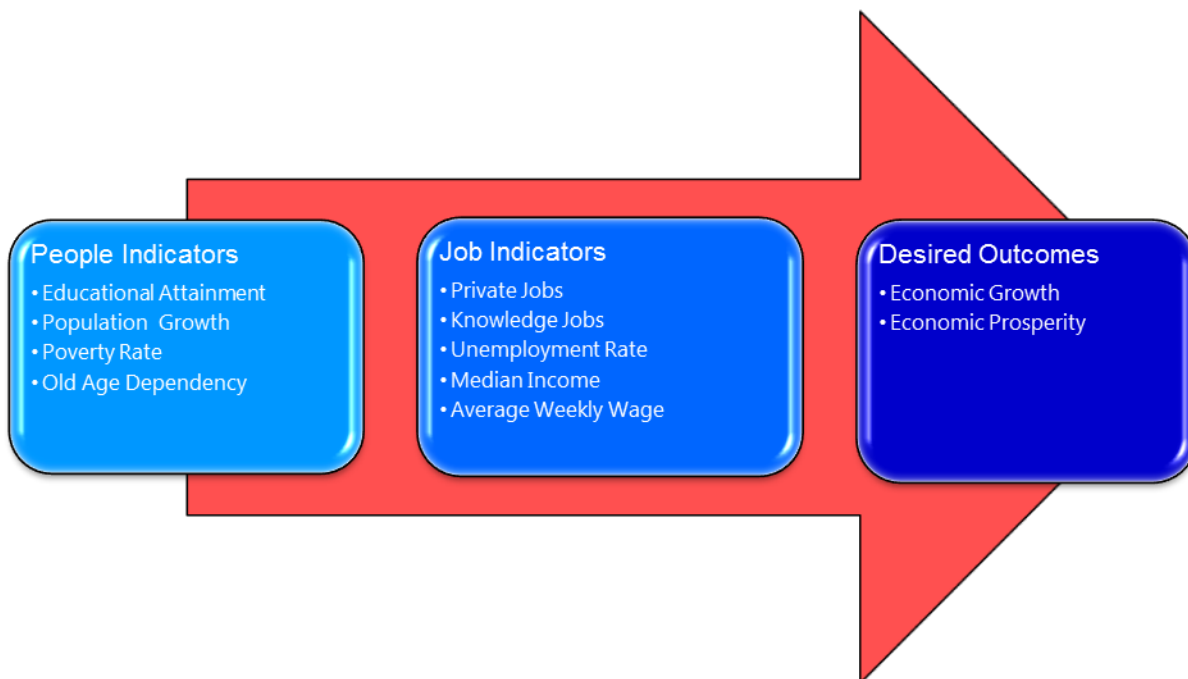
To assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Lowndes County community relative to its peer and aspirant communities, we identified 12 indicators that are linked to economic growth and prosperity.

The 12 indicators are divided into two categories, **People Indicators** which capture the demographic characteristics of a community and **Job Indicators** which capture the labor market characteristics of a community. The economic indicators used to compare and rank the 15 communities are obtained from widely-accepted and reliable sources, and are regularly updated.

The Report

The report is divided into two major sections:

- **The Region Over Time** - The first section provides a comparison of the people and job indicators over time. The Lowndes County community indicators are compared to the peer and aspirant communities' average, the Southeast region, and the United States indicators over time.
- **The Region Today** - The second section compares the most recent people and job indicators for the 15 communities and uses the data to rank the 15 communities.

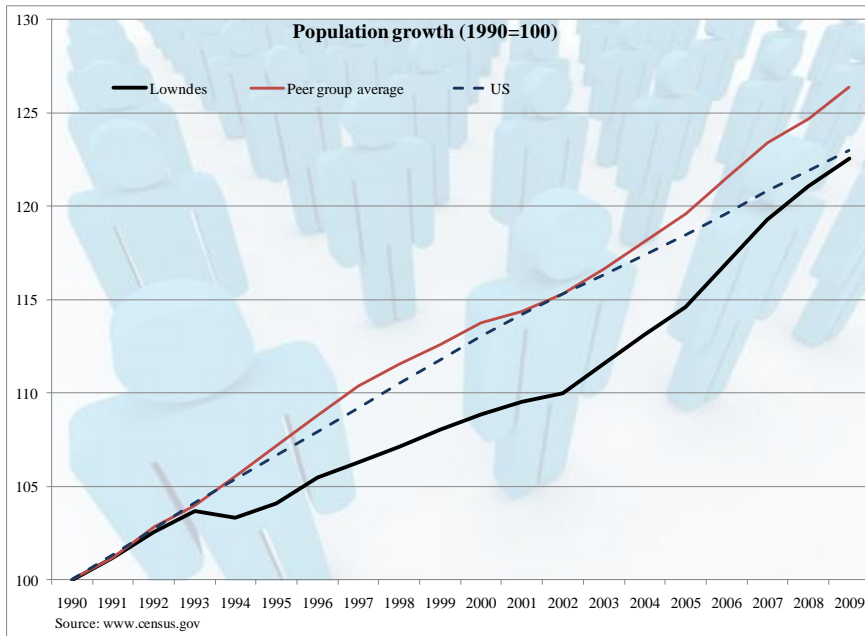


For this report, the cost of living index has been disregarded as neither a people nor a job indicator.

We acknowledge the importance of such indicators in economic health analyses.

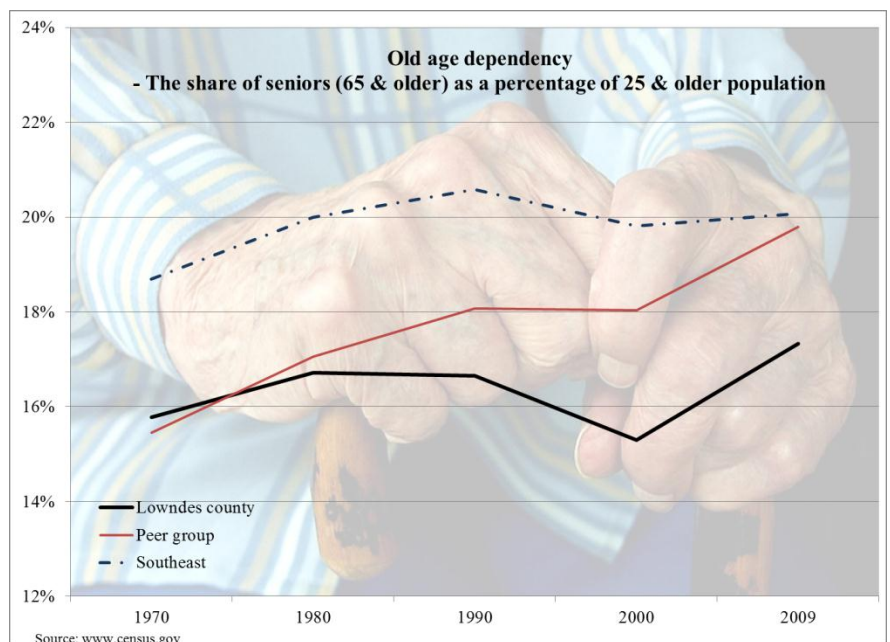
However, there are significant data availability and reliability issues that limit the ability to meaningfully compare and interpret cost of living data across all the selected peer communities.

This section of the report compares economic indicators for the Lowndes County community to the peer and aspirant average, the Southeast region, and the United States. The comparison reveals the trends of the various indicators for and weaknesses of the Lowndes County community over time.

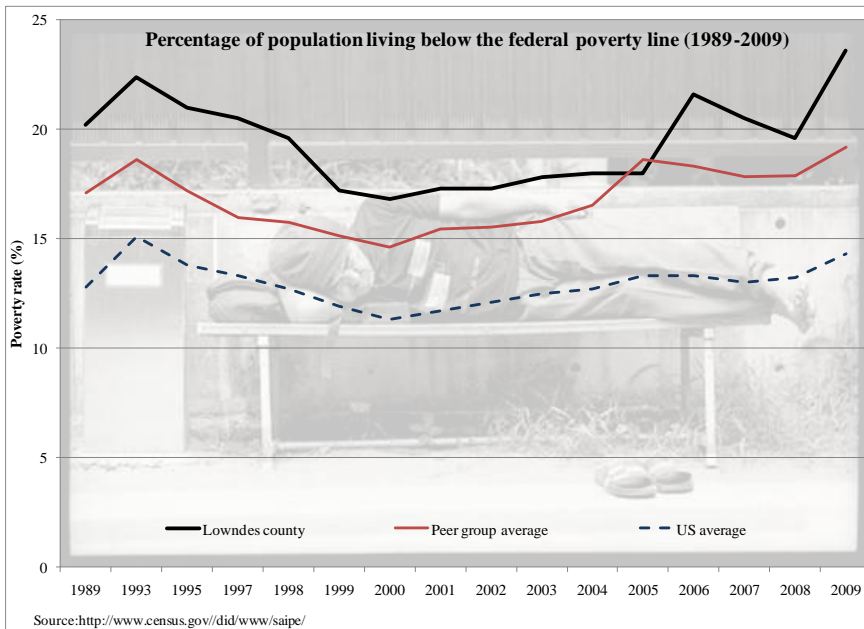
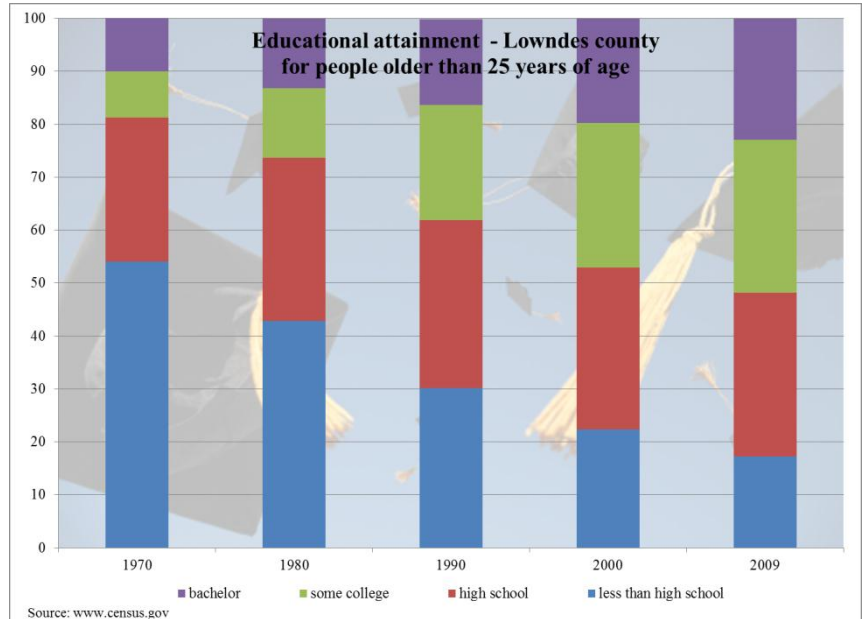


Population Growth: From 1993 to 2002, Lowndes County’s population grew at a slower rate than the peer and aspirant average and the United States. Beginning in 2003, the year the U.S. Office of Management and Budget recognized the greater Valdosta area as a Metropolitan Statistical Area, Lowndes County’s population grew at a faster rate than both the United States and the peer and aspirant communities.

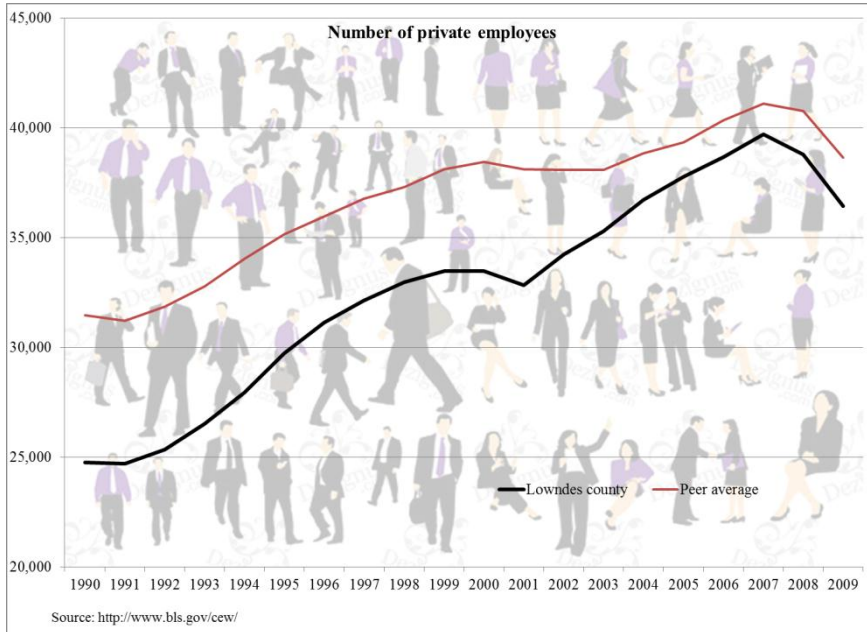
Old Age Dependency: Old Age Dependency is the ratio of people 65 years and older as a percent of population 25 years and older. The Lowndes County community has a lower ratio of Old Age Dependency over the forty year time horizon. While the change of the Lowndes County community ratio mirrors the peer and aspirant community average over the last ten years, the flat growth of the 1980s and decline during the 1990s places the ratio below the Southeast region and peer and aspirant average ratios.



Educational Attainment: This graphic reveals the positive changes in educational attainment for the Lowndes County community over the last 40 years. The percent of the population with less than a high school education has steadily declined over the last 40 years. While the percent of the population with a high school diploma has not changed significantly, the growth rates of the population with some college or a bachelor’s degree or higher have increased significantly. The peer and aspirant average changes are consistent with Lowndes County’s changes over time.

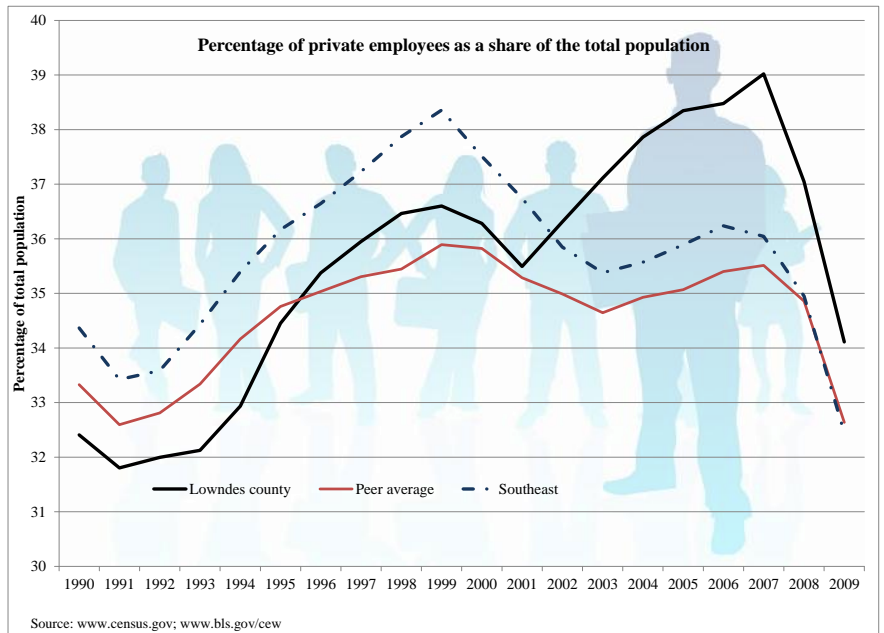


Poverty Rate: The poverty rate for the Lowndes County community is higher than the United States and the peer and aspirant averages. While the poverty rate remained fairly stable between 1999 and 2005, the poverty rate gap for the Lowndes County community increased over the last four years. The Lowndes County community’s poverty rate increased at a faster rate than the United States average and the peer and aspirant communities since 2008.

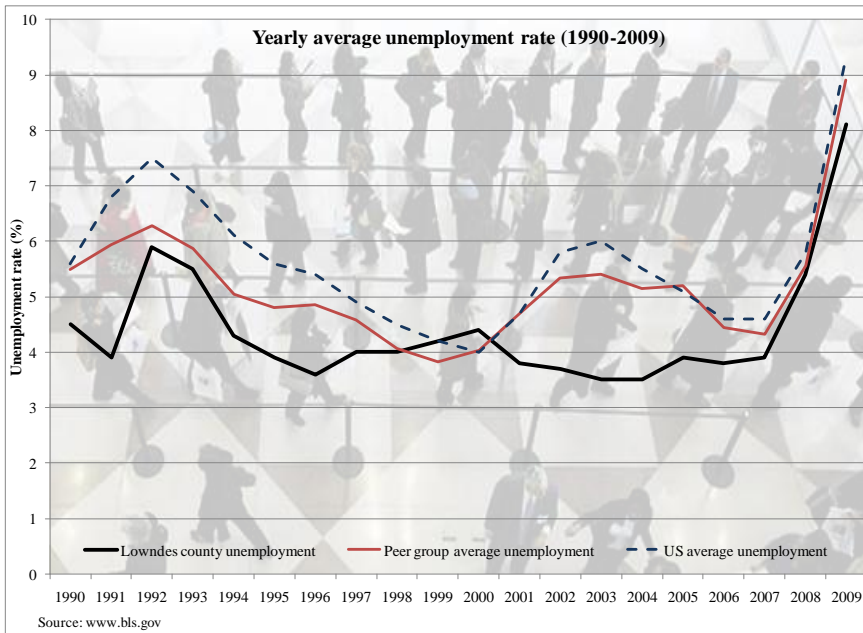
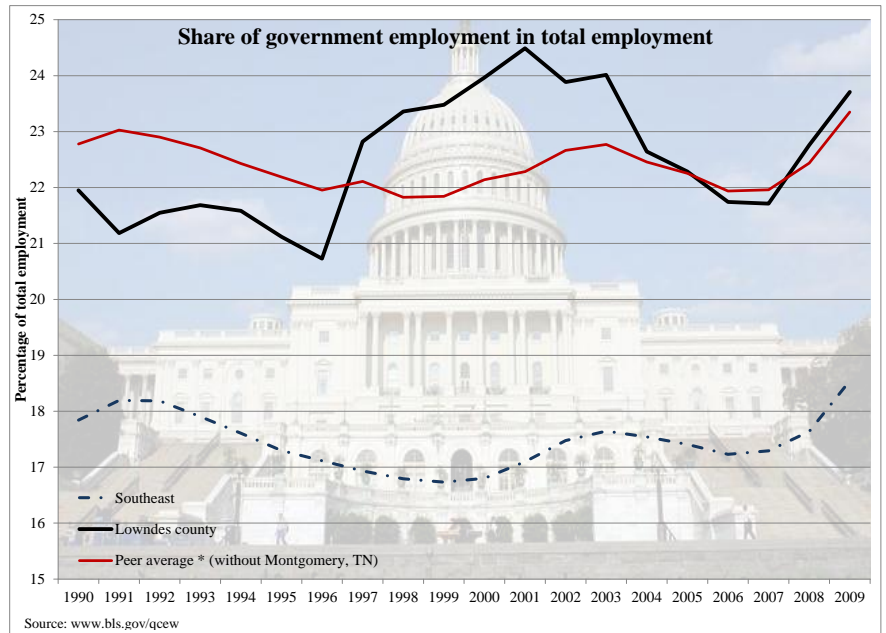


Total Private Sector Jobs: While the total number of private sector jobs was below the peer and aspirant average, the number of private sector jobs in the Lowndes County community increased at a faster rate than the peer and aspirant community average from 1990 through 2007. During the period of the Great Recession, the number of private sector jobs lost in the Lowndes County community mirrored the average number of jobs lost for the peer and aspirant communities.

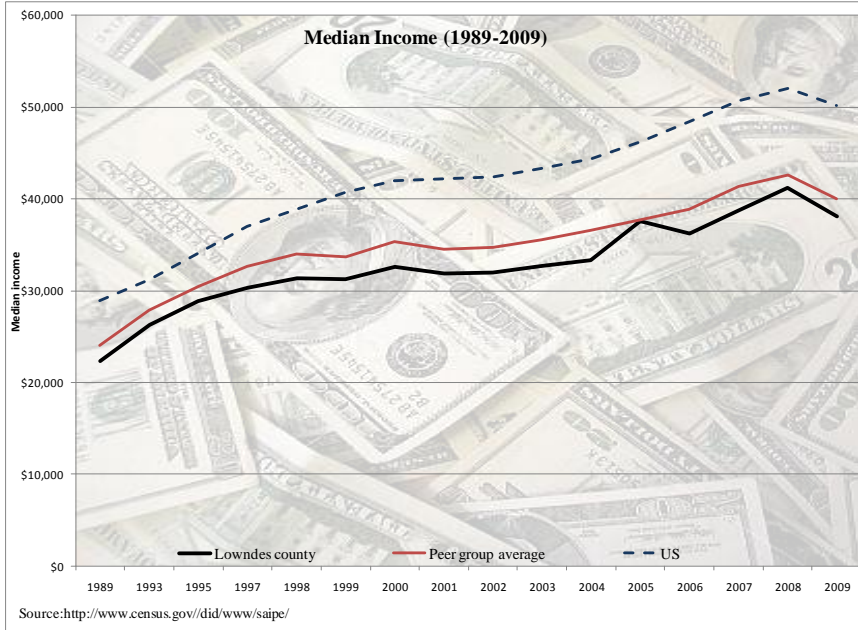
Private Sector Employment: Over the first decade of the twenty-first century, the percent of private employees as a share of the total population grew at a more accelerated rate for the Lowndes community than the Southeast region and the peer and aspirant communities.



Government Employment: The share of local, state, and federal government employment as a percent of total employment for the Lowndes County community and the peer and aspirant community average is above the Southeast region average



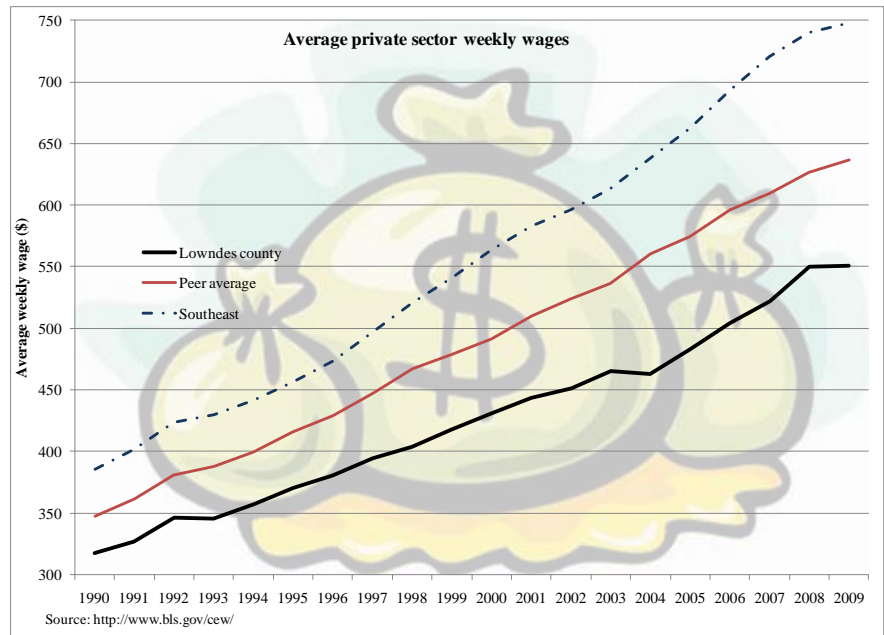
Unemployment Rate: From 1993 through 2007, the Lowndes County community had a low and steady average unemployment rate of around 4%. For most of the time period, the Lowndes County community's average unemployment rate was below the United States' average and peer and aspirant communities' average unemployment rates. Since the beginning of the recession during 2007, the Lowndes County community unemployment rate has increased at a rate similar to the United States and the peer and aspirant communities.



Median Household Income: The Lowndes County community's median income is lower than the United States and the peer and aspirant communities. Since widening during the late 1990s, the median income gap between the Lowndes County community and the United States has remained fairly constant with the median income approximately \$12,000 lower for the Lowndes County community. Since 2008, the median income gap has closed slightly between the Lowndes County community and the peer and aspirant communities.

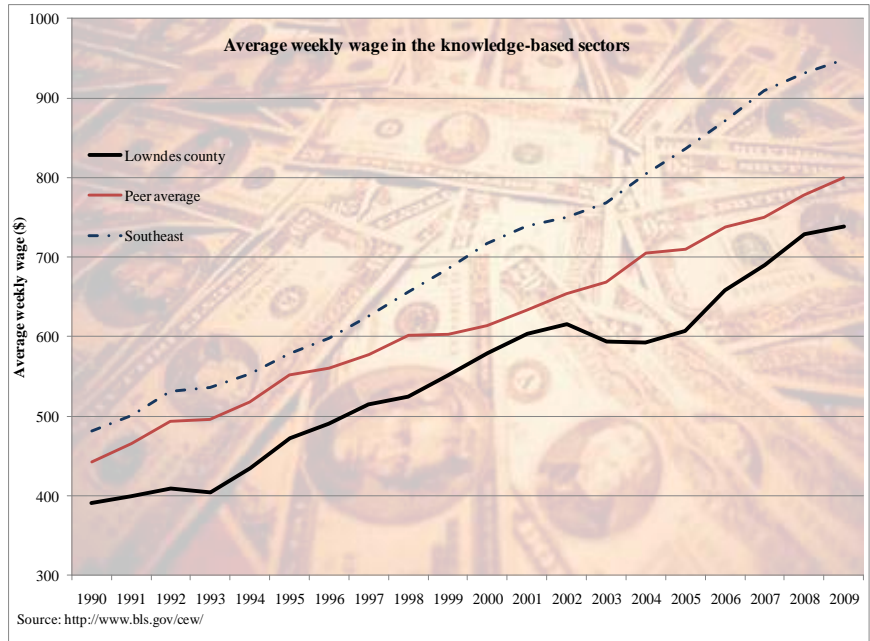
Average Private Sector Weekly Wage:

The Lowndes County community's average private sector weekly wage is less than the Southeast region's average and peer and aspirant's average weekly wages. Although Lowndes County's average weekly wage has increased over the 20-year period, the rate of increase is slower than both the Southeast's and the peer and aspirant communities' averages, leading to a widening of the average weekly wage gap.

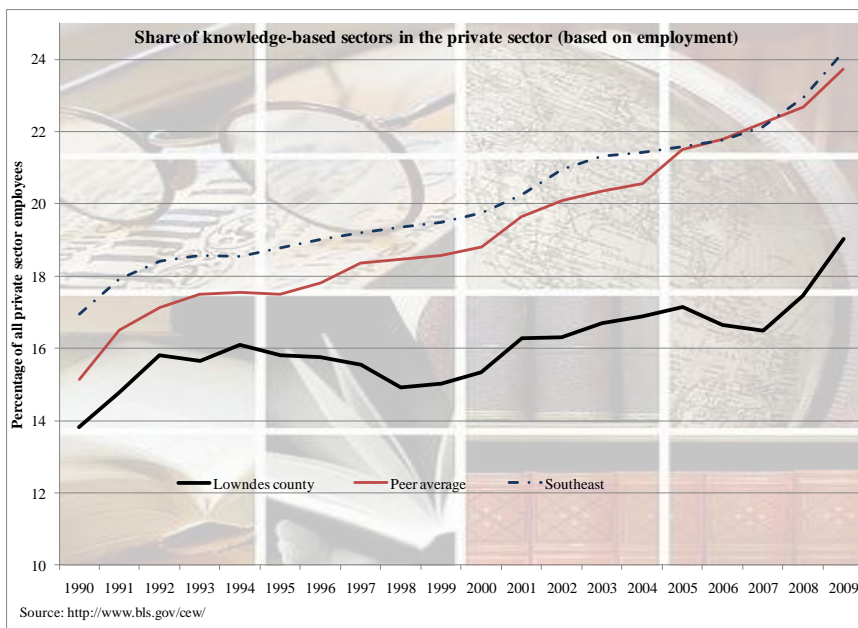


Knowledge-Based Sector Average

Weekly Wage: Knowledge-based sector jobs are based on two-digit NAICS numbers for Information (51), Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services (54), Management of Companies & Enterprises (55), and Health Care and Social Assistance (62). The Lowndes County community's knowledge-based sector average weekly wage is lower than the Southeast region's average and the peer and aspirant's average weekly wages. While the weekly wage gap has remained fairly constant between the Lowndes County community and the peer and aspirant communities, the average weekly wage gap has increased between the Lowndes County community and the Southeast region knowledge-based sector average weekly wage.



While the weekly wage gap has remained fairly constant between the Lowndes County community and the peer and aspirant communities, the average weekly wage gap has increased between the Lowndes County community and the Southeast region knowledge-based sector average weekly wage.



Knowledge-based Sector Share of Private Sector:

The share of the knowledge-based sector has increased as a percent of the total private sector for the Lowndes County community over the last 20 years. Compared to the Southeast region average and the peer & aspirant average, the share of the knowledge-based sector in Lowndes County is consistently smaller with a growing gap that peaked in the last two years of the analyzed time period.

The people of the Lowndes County community are an important asset and are vital to the health and success of the community. The People Indicators are the five indicators that reflect the demographic foundations of the communities and measure how well-prepared the people in the community are for work. The following tables rank the 15 communities for each of the five People Indicators.

Population Growth: A strong population growth rate is a sign that the community is growing and that job opportunities are available. Using the average population growth rate for the 10-year period ending 2009, the Lowndes County community ranks fifth among the peer and aspirant communities.

Rank	Community	State	Population Growth (2000-2009)
1	Houston	GA	22.0%
2	Montgomery	TN	19.0%
5	Lowndes	GA	15.8%
	Average		11.0%
14	Ouachita	LA	2.9%
15	Wayne	NC	0.5%

Educational Attainment – High School: With 82.7% of the population over 25 years of age with a high school diploma or equivalent, Lowndes County is in the middle of the pack ranking 8th among the 15 communities. A low graduation rate increases the likelihood of lifelong low wages and increases risk of poverty.

Rank	Community	State	High School diploma or GED (2005-2009)
1	Montgomery	TN	90.3%
2	Houston, GA	GA	88.0%
	Average		83.0%
8	Lowndes	GA	82.7%
14	Nash	NC	80.4%
15	Floyd	GA	75.8%

Educational Attainment – Bachelor Degree: Lowndes County is again in the middle of the pack ranking 7th among the 15 communities with only 22.9% of the population over 25 years of age having a bachelor's degree or higher. As markets become more competitive regionally, nationally and globally, workforce preparedness will become increasingly more important. Obtaining the skills to build home-grown businesses and to recruit knowledge based jobs require an educated labor force.

Rank	Community	State	Bachelor degree population over 25 (2005-2009)
1	Clarke	GA	41.2%
2	Lee	AL	30.7%
	Average		23.6%
7	Lowndes	GA	22.9%
14	Floyd	GA	18.0%
15	Wayne	NC	16.4%

Poverty Rate: This is the percentage of people whose income is below the poverty level. The Lowndes County community ranks 14th out of the 15 peer and aspirant communities.

Rank	Community	State	Poverty Rate (2009)
1	Houston	GA	13.7%
2	Montgomery	TN	13.8%
	Average		19.5%
14	Lowndes	GA	23.6%
15	Clarke	GA	36.3%

Old Age Dependency: Old Age Dependency is the ratio of people over 65 years versus those 25 years and older. While an aging population may bring an accumulation of life-long wealth to a community, an aging population requires more services and support. The Lowndes County community ranks the 3rd lowest ratio suggesting that it has a relative larger working-age population.

Rank	Community	State	Old Age Dependency (2009)
1	Montgomery	TN	14.1%
2	Lee	AL	16.5%
3	Lowndes	GA	17.3%
	Average		19.6%
14	Nash	NC	22.7%
15	Houston	AL	23.5%

Jobs are the life-blood of a community. High paying jobs attract skilled workers to a community and contribute to a higher quality of life. The Job Indicators are the six indicators that reflect the workforce foundations of the communities. The following tables rank the 15 communities for each of the six Job Indicators.

Number of Private Jobs: The Lowndes County community ranks in the middle of the peer and aspirant communities at 8th in the total number of private sector jobs.

Total Private Sector			
Rank	Community	State	Employment (2009)
1	Ouachita	LA	56,817
2	Rapides	LA	46,648
Average			38,491
8	Lowndes	GA	36,436
14	Floyd	GA	30,638
15	Forrest	MS	25,419

Median Income: Median household income is one measure of household purchasing power. This measures income from all sources. The Lowndes County community ranks toward the bottom of the peer and aspirant communities at 11th.

Median Income			
Rank	Community	State	(2009)
1	Houston	GA	\$50,733
2	Montgomery	TN	\$46,523
Average			\$39,914
11	Lowndes	GA	\$38,143
14	Forrest	MS	\$33,909
15	Clarke	GA	\$32,727

Average Weekly Wage: With an average weekly private sector wage of \$551, the Lowndes County community ranks last among the peer and aspirant communities.

Average Weekly			
Rank	Community	State	Wage (2009)
1	Morgan	AL	\$709
2	Floyd	GA	\$692
Average			\$631
14	Lee	AL	\$555
15	Lowndes	GA	\$551

Knowledge-based sector jobs as a share of all jobs:

The Lowndes County community ranks near the bottom of the peer and aspirant communities with only 19% of all jobs in the knowledge-based sector.

Rank	Community	State	Knowledge-based sector jobs as a share of all jobs (2009)
1	Rapides	LA	31.8%
2	Ouachita	LA	30.4%
	Average		20.4%
13	Lowndes	GA	19.0%
14	Morgan	AL	15.8%
15	Lee	AL	14.1%

Knowledge-based sector Average Weekly wage:

Knowledge-based sector jobs are often high paying jobs. The Lowndes County community ranks 11th among the peer and aspirant communities.

Rank	Community	State	Knowledge-based sector Average Weekly Wage (2009)
1	Forrest	MS	\$993
2	Houston	GA	\$941
	Average		\$796
11	Lowndes	GA	\$739
14	Montgomery	TN	\$703
15	Wayne	NC	\$592

Unemployment Rate: With an average unemployment rate of 8.1%, the Lowndes County community's unemployment rate is slightly lower than the peer and aspirant average unemployment rate for 2009.

Rank	Community	State	Average Unemployment Rate (2009)
1	Rapides	LA	6.4%
2	Houston	GA	6.9%
6	Lowndes	GA	8.1%
	Average		8.8%
14	Florence	SC	11.8%
15	Nash	NC	12.5%

The rank order of the economic indicators provides a quantifiable ranking of how the Lowndes County community compares to the 14 peer and aspirant communities. The economic indicators are divided into two major groups: the People Indicators and the Job Indicators. The numerical ranking of each indicator within the major categories are summed together to determine a rank standing for each group and overall.

People Indicator Standing			Job Indicator Standing			Overall Standing	
1	Montgomery, TN		1	Rapides, LA		1	Houston, GA
2	Houston, GA		2	Houston, GA		2	Warren, KY
3	Lee, AL		3	Warren, KY		3	Clarke, GA
4	Warren, KY		4	Ouachita, LA		4	Rapides, LA
5	Clarke, GA		5	Clarke, GA		5	Montgomery, TN
6	Lowndes, GA		6	Florence, SC		6	Ouachita, LA
7	Forrest, MS		7	Houston, AL		7	Houston, AL
8	Houston, AL		8	Floyd, GA		8	Florence, SC
9T	Ouachita, LA		9	Morgan, AL		9	Forrest, MS
9T	Rapides, LA		10	Forrest, MS		10	Lee, AL
11	Florence, SC		11	Montgomery, TN		11	Lowndes, GA
12	Morgan, AL		12	Nash, NC		12	Morgan, AL
13	Nash, NC		13	Lowndes, GA		13	Floyd, GA
14	Wayne, NC		14	Wayne, NC		14	Nash, NC
15	Floyd, GA		15	Lee, AL		15	Wayne, NC

T = a tie ranking between two communities

The Lowndes County community has an overall standing of **eleventh** among the 15 peer and aspirant communities. This standing is a snapshot in time ranking of the 15 communities.

The following are the economic indicator complete tables.

Population Growth			
Rank	Community	State	(2000-2009)
1	Houston	GA	22.0%
2	Montgomery	TN	19.0%
3	Lee	AL	17.6%
4	Warren	KY	17.1%
5	Lowndes	GA	15.8%
6	Clarke	GA	14.1%
7	Houston	AL	12.6%
8	Forrest	MS	11.3%
9	Nash	NC	8.0%
10	Florence	SC	6.7%
11	Floyd	GA	6.0%
12	Rapides	LA	6.0%
13	Morgan	AL	5.5%
14	Ouachita	LA	2.9%
15	Wayne	NC	0.5%

High School diploma or GED			
Rank	Community	State	(2005-2009)
1	Montgomery	TN	90.3%
2	Houston	GA	88.0%
3	Forrest	MS	84.7%
4T	Lee	AL	84.6%
4T	Clarke	GA	84.6%
6	Warren	KY	84.3%
7	Ouachita	LA	83.1%
8	Lowndes	GA	82.7%
9	Rapides	LA	81.6%
10T	Morgan	AL	81.3%
10T	Houston	AL	81.3%
12	Wayne	NC	81.0%
13	Florence	SC	80.6%
14	Nash	NC	80.4%
15	Floyd	GA	75.8%

Bachelor degree population over 25			
Rank	Community	State	(2005-2009)
1	Clarke	GA	41.2%
2	Lee	AL	30.7%
3	Warren	KY	27.9%
4	Forrest	MS	26.5%
5	Houston	GA	25.1%
6	Ouachita	LA	24.2%
7	Lowndes	GA	22.9%
8	Montgomery	TN	22.8%
9	Florence	SC	20.6%
10	Morgan	AL	19.6%
11T	Houston	AL	19.4%
11T	Rapides	LA	19.4%
13	Nash	NC	18.9%
14	Floyd	GA	18.0%
15	Wayne	NC	16.4%

Poverty Rate (2009)			
Rank	Community	State	
1	Houston	GA	13.7%
2	Montgomery	TN	13.8%
3	Rapides	LA	15.5%
4	Nash	NC	15.6%
5	Morgan	AL	15.9%
6	Warren	KY	17.1%
7	Houston	AL	17.7%
8	Florence	SC	18.4%
9	Floyd	GA	19.8%
10	Wayne	NC	20.0%
11	Lee	AL	20.7%
12	Ouachita	LA	20.8%
13	Forrest	MS	23.1%
14	Lowndes	GA	23.6%
15	Clarke	GA	36.3%

Old Age			
Rank	Community	State	Dependency (2009)
1	Montgomery	TN	14.1%
2	Lee	AL	16.5%
3	Lowndes	GA	17.3%
4	Houston	GA	17.4%
5	Clarke	GA	17.8%
6	Warren	KY	18.7%
7	Ouachita	LA	19.6%
8	Wayne	NC	20.1%
9	Florence	SC	20.6%
10	Forrest	MS	21.2%
11	Rapides	LA	21.3%
12	Morgan	AL	21.4%
13	Floyd	GA	22.2%
14	Nash	NC	22.7%
15	Houston	AL	23.5%

Total Private Sector			
Rank	Community	State	Employment (2009)
1	Ouachita	LA	56,817
2	Rapides	LA	46,648
3	Florence	SC	46,467
4	Warren	KY	45,338
5	Clarke	GA	44,308
6	Houston	AL	38,903
7	Morgan	AL	38,144
8	Lowndes	GA	36,436
9	Montgomery	TN	34,630
10	Nash	NC	34,581
11	Lee	AL	33,476
12	Houston	GA	32,832
13	Wayne	NC	32,733
14	Floyd	GA	30,638
15	Forrest	MS	25,419

Median Income			
Rank	Community	State	(2009)
1	Houston	GA	\$50,733
2	Montgomery	TN	\$46,523
3	Warren	KY	\$43,316
4	Morgan	AL	\$40,317
5	Wayne	NC	\$40,291
6	Florence	SC	\$39,919
7	Nash	NC	\$39,770
8	Floyd	GA	\$39,682
9	Rapides	LA	\$38,872
10	Houston	AL	\$38,751
11	Lowndes	GA	\$38,143
12	Ouachita	LA	\$37,928
13	Lee	AL	\$37,836
14	Forrest	MS	\$33,909
15	Clarke	GA	\$32,727

Average Weekly			
Rank	Community	State	Wage (2009)
1	Morgan	AL	\$709
2	Floyd	GA	\$692
3	Warren	KY	\$666
4	Clarke	GA	\$664
5	Houston	AL	\$653
6	Florence	SC	\$651
7	Rapides	LA	\$646
8	Ouachita	LA	\$643
9	Houston	GA	\$634
10	Forrest	MS	\$632
11	Nash	NC	\$631
12	Montgomery	TN	\$581
13	Wayne	NC	\$557
14	Lee	AL	\$555
15	Lowndes	GA	\$551

Rank	Community	State	Knowledge-based sector jobs as a share of all jobs (2009)
1	Rapides	LA	31.8%
2	Ouachita	LA	30.4%
3	Floyd	GA	28.5%
4	Florence	SC	26.8%
5	Clarke	GA	26.6%
6	Warren	KY	25.2%
7	Houston	GA	24.3%
8	Forrest	MS	23.8%
9	Wayne	NC	22.7%
10	Houston	AL	22.3%
11	Nash	NC	20.1%
12	Montgomery	TN	19.9%
13	Lowndes	GA	19.0%
14	Morgan	AL	15.8%
15	Lee	AL	14.1%

Rank	Community	State	Knowledge-based sector Average Weekly Wage (2009)
1	Forrest	MS	\$993
2	Houston, GA	GA	\$941
3	Houston, AL	AL	\$904
4	Floyd	GA	\$892
5	Clarke	GA	\$873
6	Warren	KY	\$844
7	Florence	SC	\$773
8	Nash	NC	\$756
9	Ouachita	LA	\$751
10	Morgan	AL	\$739
11	Lowndes	GA	\$739
12	Rapides	LA	\$729
13	Lee	AL	\$711
14	Montgomery	TN	\$703
15	Wayne	NC	\$592

Rank	Community	State	Average Unemployment Rate (2009)
1	Rapides	LA	6.4%
2	Houston	GA	6.9%
3	Ouachita	LA	7.0%
4	Clarke	GA	7.3%
5	Forrest	MS	7.8%
6	Lowndes	GA	8.1%
7	Lee	AL	8.4%
8	Houston	AL	8.5%
9	Montgomery	TN	8.9%
10	Wayne	NC	9.0%
11	Morgan	AL	9.9%
12	Warren	KY	10.0%
13	Floyd	GA	10.2%
14	Florence	SC	11.8%
15	Nash	NC	12.5%

In the study we use data that are publicly available on the following websites:

The United States Census www.census.gov

- For population estimates, educational attainment we used the **American Community Survey**, and **Decennial Censuses**.
- For poverty and median income estimates we used the **Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates** (<http://www.census.gov//did/www/saipe/>).

The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics www.bls.gov

- We collected unemployment data from the **Local Area Unemployment Statistics** (<http://bls.gov/lau/>).
- All the employment numbers (private, knowledge-based sector, government) and the corresponding wage estimates can be found at the **Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages** (<http://bls.gov/cew/>). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the QCEW program “produces a comprehensive tabulation of employment and wage information for workers covered by State unemployment insurance (UI) laws and Federal workers covered by the Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) program. ... The QCEW program serves as a near census of ... employment and quarterly wage information by 6-digit NAICS industry at the national, State, and county levels.”

United States Military Bases www.militarybases.com

- Location of military bases