



FESAC

Federal Economic Statistics
Advisory Committee

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Exploring Data Sources of the Future: Learning and Employment Records

Key workforce and job statistics are difficult to observe in real time. Surveys and administrative data have lags, inconsistencies, and data gaps. Education, training, and work experience records — that can reveal a worker’s skillset — are dispersed across numerous inconsistent systems. Linking the information across these parts of the job market to each other and to other worker records remains a challenge that limits our understanding of the labor market.

The purpose of this session is to provide information about recent pilot projects by a set of business, government, education, and training organizations to develop an open-standards, block-chain-based infrastructure for skills-based education and training record keeping—Learning and Employment Records (LERs) — and to design an accompanying schema for employment and earnings information. The developers seek to reduce job market friction by increasing transparency for individuals seeking skills or jobs that use the skills they have, businesses seeking workers with specific skill sets, education and training institutions seeking to provide skills that are in demand, and so forth. If widely adopted, the infrastructure promises to create opportunities for improved and novel workforce and labor market statistics that piggyback on this infrastructure of record keeping standards. In a major example, this effort offers a means to enhance Unemployment Insurance wage records (by adding hours, occupation, work location and/or demographics) with little or no additional burden on employers. In addition, this approach (a private-sector effort to design an interoperable record schema and infrastructure) may provide a promising model for government data collection from establishments on other topics.

Discussion Questions

- What are the potential benefits to economic statistics from this effort?
- What are your recommendations for the agencies regarding this effort?
- What other private sector records might be amenable to a standards effort?