Lowndes County by the Numbers

How Do We Compare With Peer and Aspirant Communities?

2015 Report

VALDOSTA - LOWNDES COUNTY
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
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VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
CENTER *for* BUSINESS
&ECONOMIC RESEARCH

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 eleven states in the Southeastern region of the United States were considered as potential peer and aspirant communities for the Lowndes County community. Based upon economic, geographic, and demographic similarities, fourteen 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.

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 and 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 and 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 two two-year colleges. 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 Alexandra and a technical 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 and publishing and consulting and professional services.
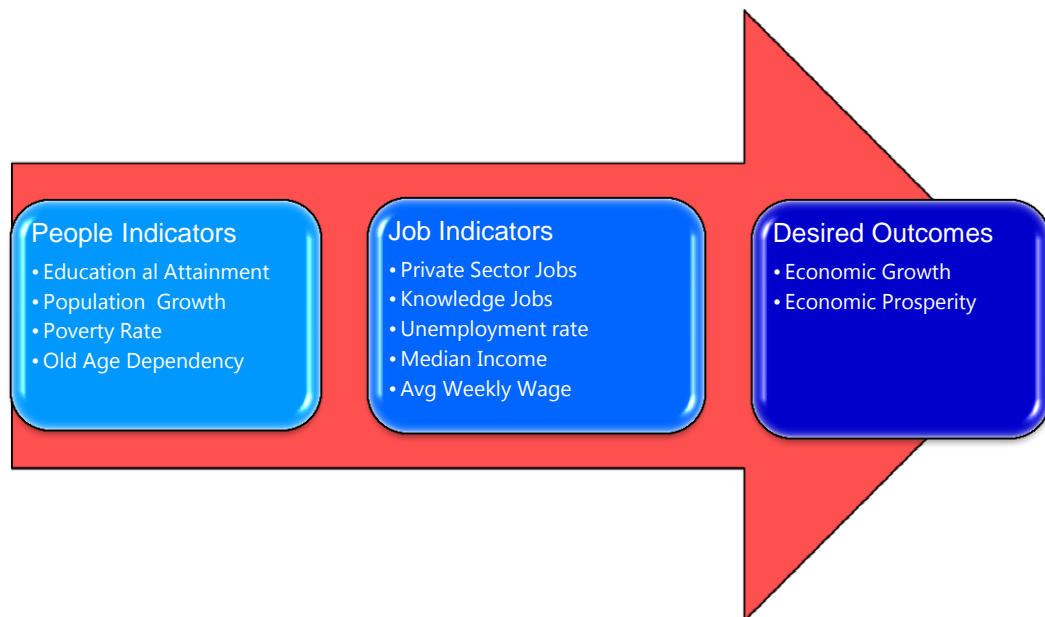
Economic Indicators

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

The twelve 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 fifteen 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 fifteen communities and uses the data to rank the fifteen communities.

People Indicators
- Education al Attainment
- Population Growth
- Poverty Rate
- Old Age Dependency

Job Indicators
- Private Sector Jobs
- Knowledge Jobs
- Unemployment rate
- Median Income
- Avg Weekly Wage

Desired Outcomes
- Economic Growth
- Economic Prosperity

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.
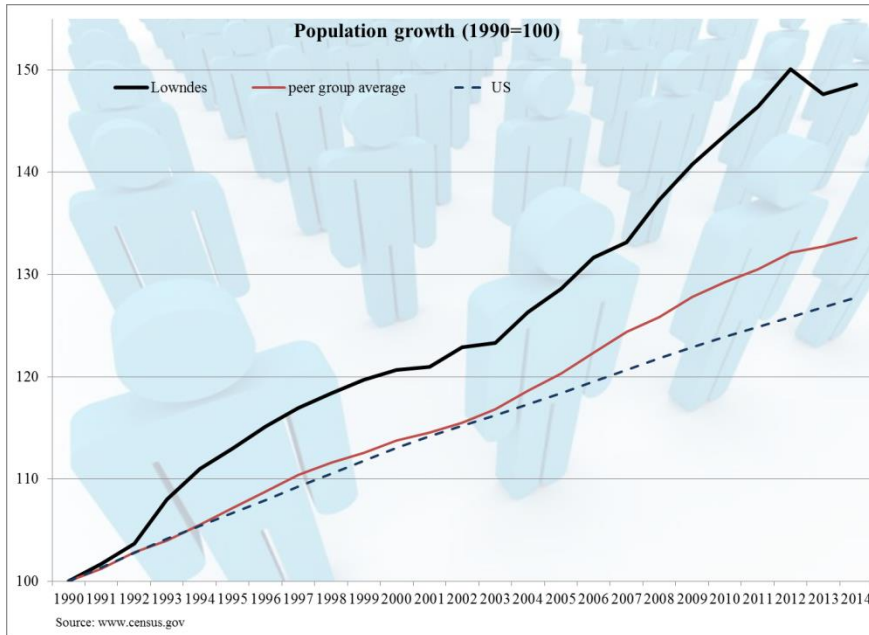
Population Growth: After a population surge between 1992 and 1994, the Lowndes County population grew at a rate comparable to the peer communities and the United States average growth rates. From 2003 through 2012, the Lowndes County population grew at a faster rate than both the peer communities and the United States. The Lowndes County population recovered over the last two years but remained below its peak 2012 population level.

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. The growth rate of old age dependency for the Lowndes County community has increased at a faster rate than the average rates of the peer and aspirant communities over the last fifteen years.

People Indicators
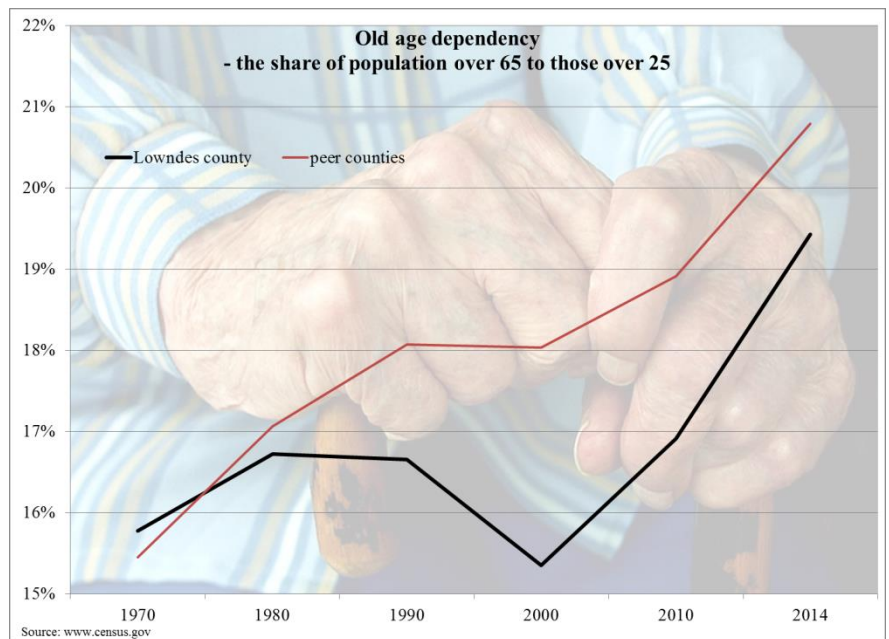
Educational Attainment: This graphic reveals the positive changes in educational attainment for the Lowndes County community over the last forty years. The percent of the population with less than a high school education has steadily declined over the last forty years. While the percent of the population with a high school degree 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.

Educational attainment - Lowndes county
(for people older than 25 years of age)

Legend: bachelor | some college | high school | less than high school

Source: www.bls.gov

Percentage of population living below the federal poverty line (1989-2013)

Legend: Lowndes | peer average | US average

Source: http://www.census.gov//did/www/saipe/
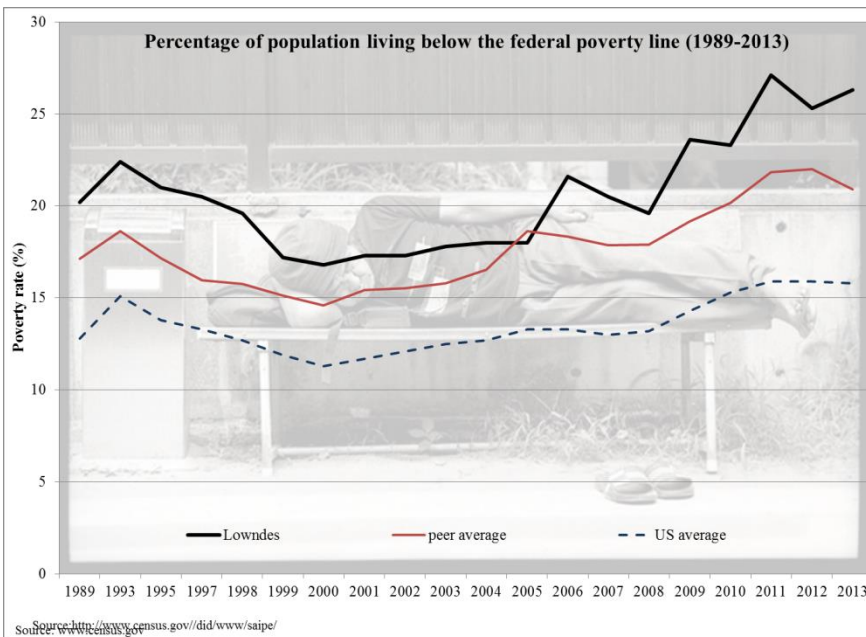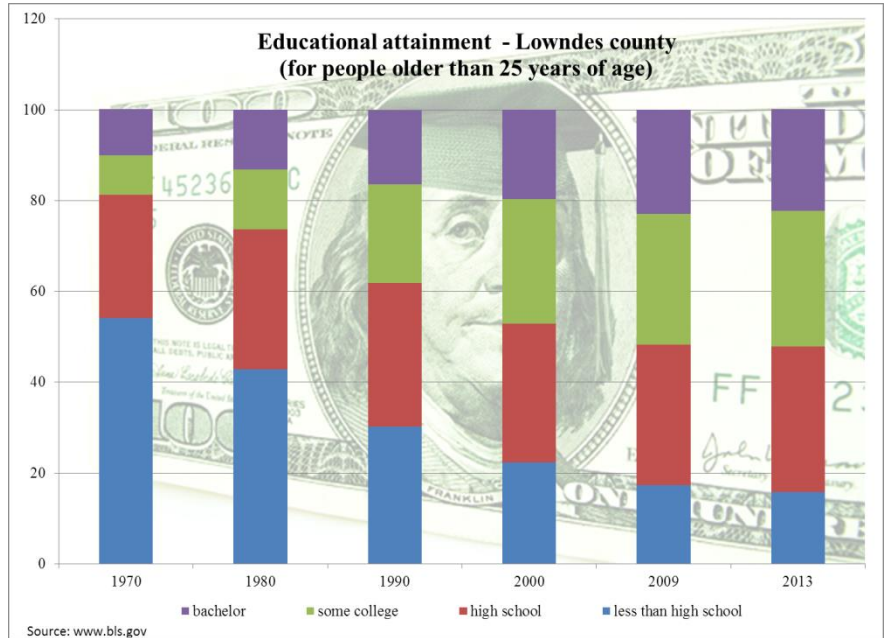
Poverty Rate: The poverty rate for the Lowndes County community is higher than the peer communities and United States average poverty rates. Since the beginning of the Great Recession in 2007, the Lowndes County community poverty rate increased at a faster rate than the peer communities and the United States averages. While the peer and aspirant average poverty rate has declined since 2012, the Lowndes County poverty rate has increased.

Number of private employees

Source: http://www.bls.gov/cew/
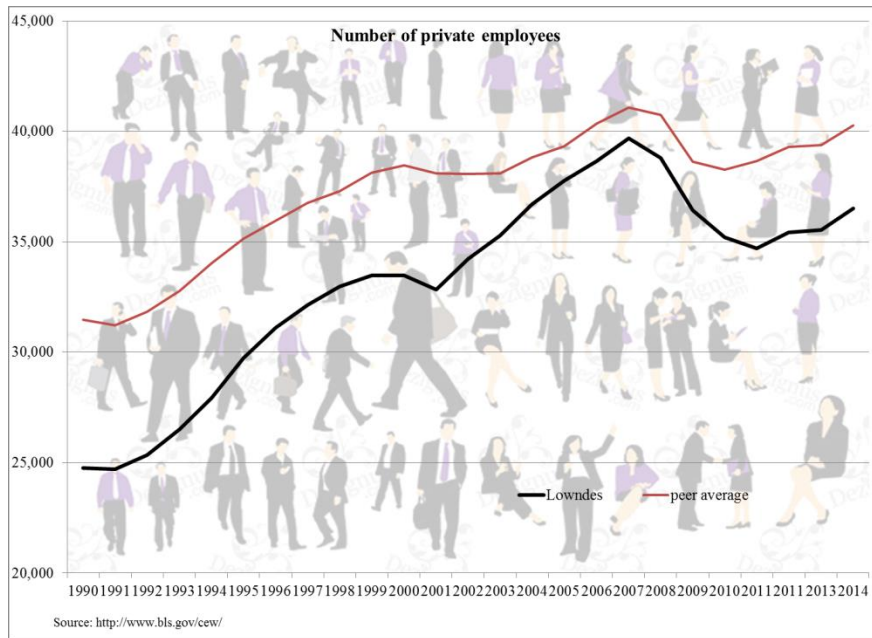
Total Private Sector Jobs: While the total number of private sector jobs was below the peer and aspirant average, the number of private sector jobs in the Lowndes County community increased at a faster rate than the peer and aspirant community average between 1990 through 2007. From 2007 through 2011 the Lowndes County community lost 12.5% of its private employment, which was more than each of the peer and aspirant communities. Since 2011, job growth for the Lowndes County community has been similar to the average of the peer and aspirant communities.

Private Sector Employment: Over the last twenty-five years, the Lowndes County community private sector employment as a share of the total population has been more volatile than the peer and Southeast region averages. Since the beginning of the Great Recession, the number of private employees as a share of the total population for the Lowndes County community declined to a level lower than the peer and Southeast region averages. Although improved since 2012, the number of private employees as a share of total population for the Lowndes County community remains lower than the peer and Southeast averages.

Number of private employees as a share of the total population

Source: www.census.gov; www.bls.gov/cew
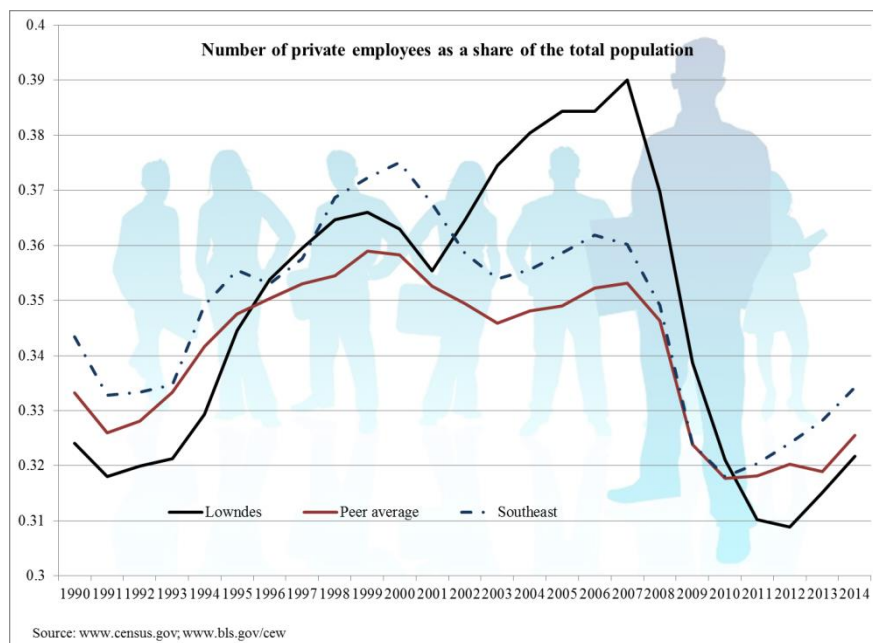
Government Employment: Since 2012, the share of government employment as a percent of total employment for the Lowndes County community has declined at a faster rate than the peer and aspirant community average. The share of government employment as a percent of total employment for the Lowndes County community and the peer and aspirant community averages remain significantly higher than the Southeast region average
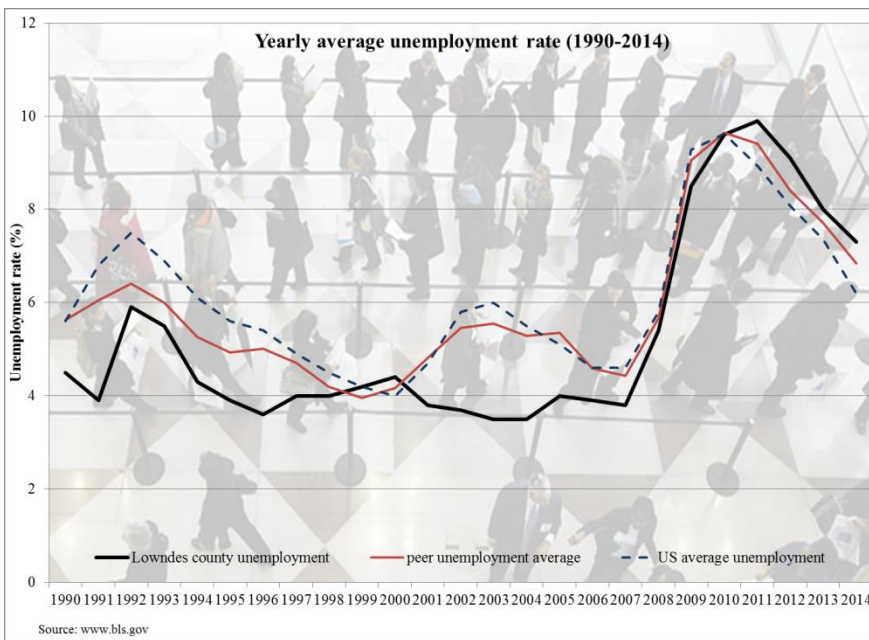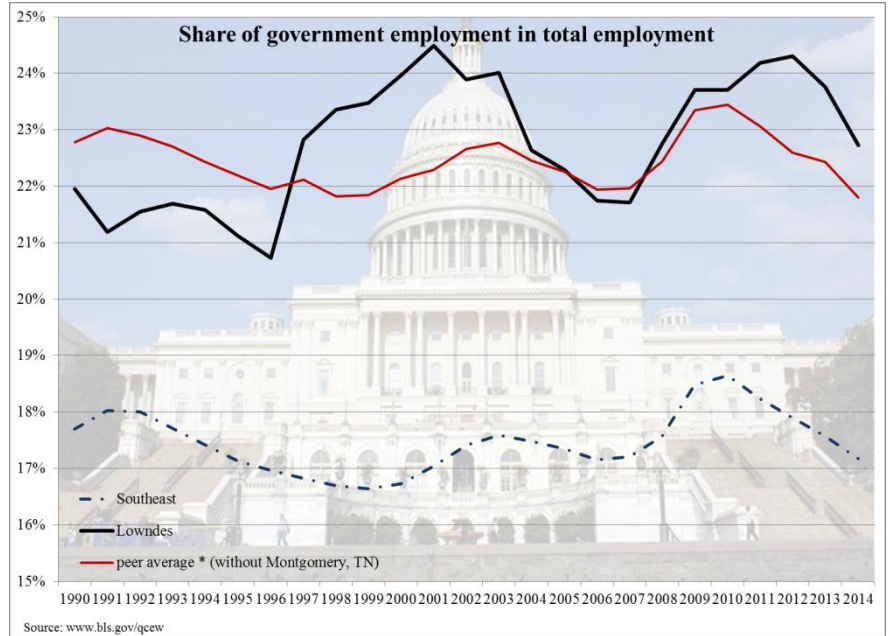
Unemployment Rate: From 1993 through 2007, the Lowndes County community had a low and steady average unemployment rate of around 4%. For most of the time period, the Lowndes County community's average unemployment rate was below the average peer and U.S. average unemployment rates. Although the rate declined since its peak during 2011, the Lowndes County community unemployment remained above the peer and U.S. average unemployment rates.

Median Income (1989-2013)

Source:http://www.census.gov//did/www/saipe/
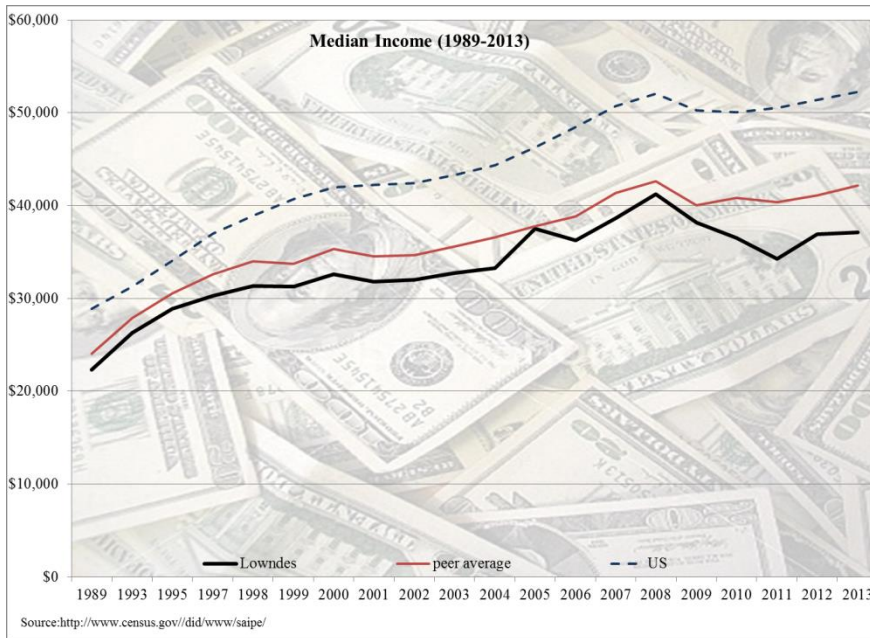
Median Household Income: The Lowndes County community's median income is lower than the United States, and the peer and aspirant communities. Since widening during the late 1990s, the median income gap between the Lowndes County community and the United States has remained fairly constant with the median income approximately $12,000 lower for the Lowndes County community. Since 2012, the Lowndes County community's median income has remained flat and the median income gap has widened.

Average Private Sector Weekly Wage: The Lowndes County community average private sector weekly wage is less than the Southeast region's average and peer and aspirant's average weekly wages, and has increased at a slower rate than both groups. Adjusting for price changes, the purchasing power of weekly wages for the Lowndes County community has remained fairly flat over the last twenty-four years. Since 2011, the purchasing power gap between the Lowndes County community and the peer communities and the Southeast averages increased.

Average private sector weekly wages

Source: http://www.bls.gov/cew/

Average weekly wage in the knowledge-based sectors
Source: http://www.bls.gov/cew/
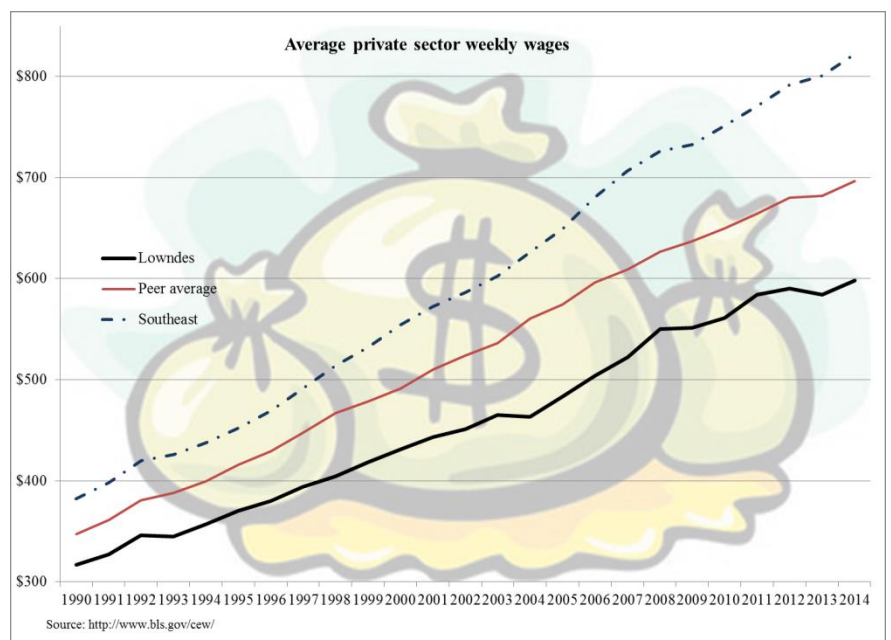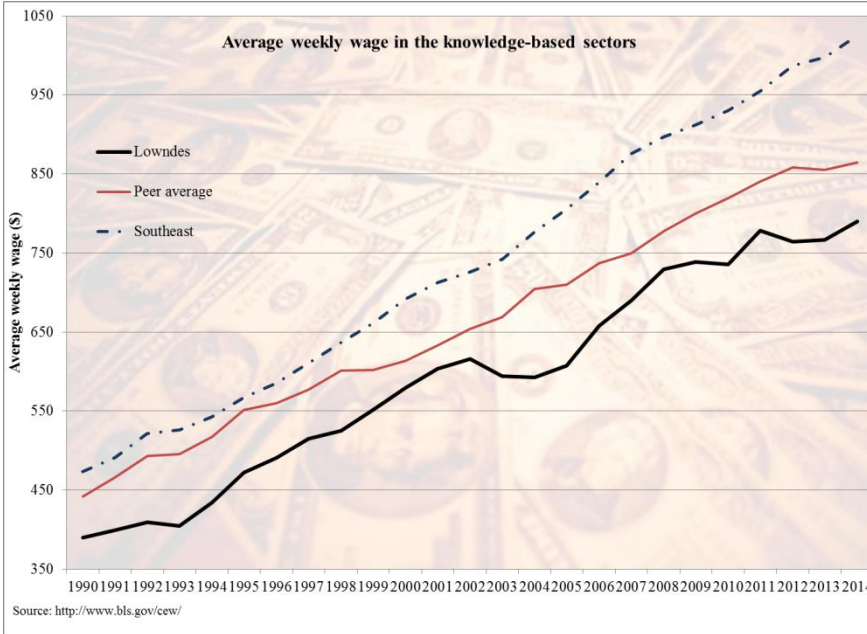
Knowledge-Based Sector Average Weekly Wage: The Lowndes County community's knowledge-based sector average weekly wage while improving over the last year remained lower than the average for the Southeast region, and the peer and aspirant communities. The wage gap between the Lowndes County community and peer average declined over the last year.

Knowledge-based Sector Share of Private Sector: While the share of knowledge-based sector jobs in the private sector for the Lowndes County community increased from 2007 through 2010, the share of knowledge-based sector jobs has declined since 2012. The Lowndes County community share of knowledge-based sector jobs remained below the peer and Southeast averages.

Share of knowledge-based sectors in the private sector (based on employment)
Source: http://www.bls.gov/cew/
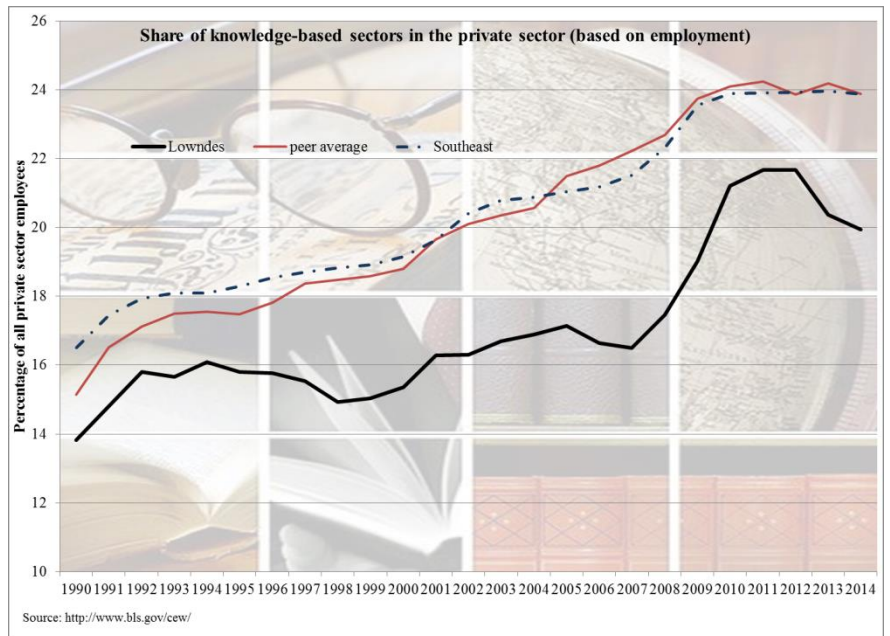
The people of the Lowndes County community are an important asset and are vital to the health and success of the community. The People Indicators are the five indicators that reflect the demographic foundations of the communities and measure how well-prepared the people in the community are for work. The following tables rank the fifteen 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 eleven-year period ending 2014, the Lowndes County community rank is unchanged at 5th among the peer and aspirant communities.

Rank	County	State	Population growth (2004-2014)
1	Montgomery	TN	32.2%
2	Lee	AL	26.2%
5	**Lowndes**	**GA**	**17.6%**
	Average		12.1%
14	Rapides	LA	4.2%
15	Floyd	GA	2.2%

Source: www.census.gov

Educational Attainment – High School: A low graduation rate increases the likelihood of lifelong low wages and increases risk of poverty. With the population over 25 years of age with a high school diploma or equivalent declining from 84.2% to 84.0%, the Lowndes County community declined from 6th to 7th among the fifteen communities.

Rank	County	State	High school diploma or GED of population 25 and over (2009-2013)
1	Montgomery	TN	90.9%
2	Lee	AL	88.8%
	Average		84.2%
7	**Lowndes**	**GA**	**84.0%**
14	Morgan	AL	81.4%
15	Floyd	GA	77.9%

Source: www.census.gov

Educational Attainment – Bachelor Degree: As markets become more competitive, 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. The Lowndes County community is in the middle of the pack ranking 7th, unchanged from the previous year.

Rank	County	State	Share of the 25 & over population with at least a Bachelor degree (2009-2013)
1	Clarke	GA	39.5%
2	Lee	AL	32.5%
	Average		23.6%
7	**Lowndes**	**GA**	**23.1%**
14	Floyd	GA	18.1%
15	Wayne	NC	16.4%

Source: www.census.gov

Indicator Rankings

Poverty Rate: This is the percentage of people whose income is below the poverty level. The Lowndes County community rank is unchanged at 13th when compared to the fourteen peer communities. Although the rank did not change, the Lowndes County community poverty rate increased from 25.3% to 26.3% while the peer average declined from 22.2% to 21.2%.

Rank	County	State	Poverty Rate (2013)
1	Montgomery	TN	14.8%
2	Houston	GA	15.4%
	Average		21.2%
13	**Lowndes**	**GA**	**26.3%**
14	Forrest	MS	28.0%
15	Clarke	GA	37.2%

Source: www.census.gov

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 rank is unchanged at the 5th lowest ratio suggesting that it has a relative larger working-age population.

Rank	County	State	Old Age Dependency (2014)
1	Montgomery	TN	14.1%
2	Lee	AL	15.4%
5	**Lowndes**	**GA**	**19.4%**
	Average		20.7%
13T	Houston	AL	23.7%
13T	Floyd	GA	23.7%
15	Nash	NC	24.1%

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 fifteen communities for each of the six Job Indicators.

Number of Private Jobs: The Lowndes County community ranked 10th relative to the peer and aspirant communities, unchanged from last year.

Rank	County	State	Total Private Sector Employment (2014)
1	Ouachita	LA	59,664
2	Warren	KY	51,004
	Average		40,030
10	**Lowndes**	**GA**	**36,522**
14	Floyd	GA	32,152
15	Forrest	MS	27,134
Source: www.census.gov			

Median Income: Median household income is one measure of household purchasing power. Median household income measures income from all sources. While median household income increased, the Lowndes County community rank declined from 12th to 13th for 2013.

Rank	County	State	Median Household Income (2013)
1	Houston	GA	$52,297
2	Montgomery	TN	$51,059
	Average		$41,810
13	**Lowndes**	**GA**	**$37,138**
14	Forrest	MS	$34,391
15	Clarke	GA	$32,864
Source: www.census.gov			

Average Weekly Wage: Although the Lowndes County community average weekly wage increased from $584 to $598, the rank remained at 14th.

Rank	County	State	Average Weekly Wage (2014)
1	Morgan	AL	$801
2	Floyd	GA	$758
	Average		$690
14	**Lowndes**	**GA**	**$598**
15	Lee	AL	$582
Source: www.census.gov			

Knowledge-based sector jobs as a share of all jobs: 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 share of knowledge-based jobs rank remained unchanged from last year, down from 10th three years ago.

Rank	County	State	Share of Knowledge-based Jobs (2014)
1	Ouachita	LA	32.9%
2	Rapides	LA	31.3%
	Average		23.6%
13	**Lowndes**	**GA**	**19.9%**
14	Morgan	AL	15.8%
15	Lee	AL	13.7%
Source: www.census.gov			

Knowledge-based sector Average Weekly wage: Knowledge-based sector jobs are often high paying jobs. The Lowndes County community knowledge sector average weekly improved to $790, the highest wage since this we began gathering information for this report five years ago. The Lowndes County community's rank improved from 13th to 12th.

Rank	County	State	Knowledge Sector Average Weekly Wage (2014)
1	Forrest	MS	$801
2	Houston	AL	$758
	Average		$859
12	**Lowndes**	**GA**	**$790**
14	Lee	AL	$764
15	Wayne	NC	$743
Source: www.census.gov			

Unemployment Rate: With an average unemployment rate of 7.3%, the Lowndes County community unemployment rate is slightly higher than the peer and aspirant average unemployment rate. Since 2009, the Lowndes County community rank has declined from 6th to 11th. Over the last twelve months, the Lowndes County community unemployment rate decline has been primarily driven by net job gains.

Rank	County	State	Unemployment Rate (2014)
1T	Lee	AL	5.6%
1T	Warren	KY	5.6%
	Average		6.9%
11T	**Lowndes**	**GA**	**7.3%**
14T	Floyd	GA	7.9%
14T	Nash	NC	7.9%
Source: www.census.gov			

The rank order of the economic indicators provides a quantifiable ranking of how the Lowndes County community compares to the fourteen 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 Standing Indicators		
Rank	**County**	**State**
1	Montgomery	TN
2T	Houston	GA
2T	Lee	AL
4	Warren	KY
5	Clarke	GA
6	**Lowndes**	**GA**
7	Houston	AL
8T	Forrest	MS
8T	Ouachita	LA
10	Florence	SC
11	Morgan	AL
12	Nash	NC
13	Wayne	NC
14	Rapides	LA
15	Floyd	GA

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Job Standing Indicators		
Rank	**County**	**State**
1	Warren	KY
2	Ouachita	LA
3	Rapides	LA
4T	Clarke	GA
4T	Morgan	AL
6	Houston	AL
7	Florence	SC
8	Houston	GA
9	Floyd	GA
10	Montgomery	TN
11T	Lee	AL
11T	Wayne	NC
13	Forrest	MS
14	Nash	NC
15	**Lowndes**	**GA**

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Overall Standing 2014		
Rank	**County**	**State**
1	Warren	KY
2	Clarke	GA
3T	Houston	GA
3T	Ouachita	LA
5	Montgomery	TN
6T	Houston	AL
6T	Lee	AL
8	Morgan	AL
9	Florence	SC
10	Rapides	LA
11	Forrest	MS
12	**Lowndes**	**GA**
13	Floyd	GA
14	Wayne	NC
15	Nash	NC

T is a tie ranking between two communities

The Lowndes County community has an overall standing of **twelfth** among the fifteen peer and aspirant communities unchanged from the previous year. This standing is a snapshot in time ranking of the fifteen communities.

The following are the economic indicator complete tables.

Rank	County	State	Population growth (2004-2014)
1	Montgomery	TN	32.1%
2	Lee	AL	26.2%
3	Warren	KY	21.1%
4	Houston	GA	20.5%
5	**Lowndes**	**GA**	**17.6%**
6	Houston	AL	12.5%
7	Clarke	GA	10.2%
8	Florence	SC	7.2%
9	Wayne	NC	6.8%
10	Forrest	MS	6.4%
11	Morgan	AL	5.8%
12	Ouachita	LA	4.7%
13	Nash	NC	4.5%
14	Rapides	LA	4.2%
15	Floyd	GA	2.2%

Rank	County	State	High school diploma or GED of population 25 and over (2009-2013)
1	Montgomery	TN	90.9%
2	Houston	GA	88.8%
3	Lee	AL	86.7%
4	Warren	KY	86.6%
5	Clarke	GA	85.1%
6	Ouachita	LA	84.7%
7	**Lowndes**	**GA**	**84.0%**
8	Houston	AL	83.9%
9	Forrest	MS	83.8%
10	Nash	NC	83.1%
11	Florence	SC	82.6%
12	Rapides	LA	82.4%
13	Wayne	NC	81.7%
14	Morgan	AL	81.4%
15	Floyd	GA	77.9%

Rank	County	State	Poverty Rate (2013)
1	Montgomery	TN	14.9%
2	Houston	GA	15%
3	Nash	NC	17%
4	Morgan	AL	17%
5	Houston	AL	18%
6	Warren	KY	18%
7	Rapides	LA	20%
8	Lee	AL	20%
9	Florence	SC	20%
10	Wayne	NC	21%
11	Floyd	GA	22%
12	Ouachita	LA	24%
13	**Lowndes**	**GA**	**26%**
14	Forrest	MS	28%
15	Clarke	GA	37%

Rank	County	State	Share of the 25 & over population with at least a Bachelor degree (2009-2013)
1	Clarke	GA	39.5%
2	Lee	AL	32.5%
3	Warren	KY	28.4%
4	Forrest	MS	27.0%
5	Houston	GA	24.0%
6	Montgomery	TN	23.5%
7	Lowndes	GA	23.1%
8	Ouachita	LA	22.9%
9	Florence	SC	21.3%
10	Morgan	AL	19.9%
11	Houston	AL	19.7%
12	Nash	NC	19.2%
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3	Clarke	GA	17.7%
4	Houston	GA	18.1%
5	**Lowndes**	**GA**	**19.4%**
6	Warren	KY	19.7%
7	Ouachita	LA	20.8%
8	Forrest	MS	21.0%
9	Watne	NC	22.1%
10	Florence	SC	22.5%
11	Rapides	LA	22.7%
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13T	Floyd	GA	23.7%
15	Nash	NC	24.1%

Rank	County	State	Total Private Sector Employment (2014)
1	Ouachita	LA	59,664
2	Warren	KY	51,004
3	Florence	SC	47,762
4	Clarke	GA	46,444
5	Rapides	LA	46,377
6	Morgan	AL	39,377
7	Lee	AL	38,606
8	Montgomery	TN	38,473
9	Houston	AL	38,015
10	**Lowndes**	**GA**	**36,522**
11	Nash	NC	33,441
12	Wayne	NC	33,310
13	Houston	GA	32,164
14	Floyd	GA	32,152
15	Forrest	MS	27,134

Rank	County	State	Median Household Income (2013)
1	Houston	GA	$52,297
2	Montgomery	TN	$51,059
3	Warren	KY	$48,137
4	Lee	AL	$44,647
5	Morgan	AL	$44,079
6	Nash	NC	$41,575
7	Wayne	NC	$41,526
8	Florence	SC	$41,028
9	Ouachita	LA	$39,976
10	Houston	AL	$39,636
11	Rapides	LA	$39,411
12	Floyd	GA	$39,381
13	**Lowndes**	**GA**	**$37,138**
14	Forrest	MS	$34,391
15	Clarke	GA	$32,864

Rank	County	State	Average Weekly Wage (2014)
1	Morgan	AL	$801
2	Floyd	GA	$758
3	Warren	KY	$737
4	Clarke	GA	$724
5	Houston	AL	$712
6	Ouachita	LA	$711
7	Rapides	LA	$710
8	Forrest	MS	$703
9	Nash	NC	$698
10	Florence	SC	$694
11	Houston	GA	$658
12	Wayne	NC	$635
13	Montgomery	TN	$626
14	**Lowndes**	**GA**	**$598**
15	Lee	AL	$582

Rank	County	State	Knowledge Sector Average Weekly Wage (2014)
1	Forrest	MS	$1,026
2	Houston	AL	$951
3	Warren	KY	$930
4	Clarke	GA	$915
5	Houston	GA	$907
6	Floyd	GA	$893
7	Florence	SC	$892
8	Rapides	LA	$843
9	Ouachita	LA	$839
10	Morgan	AL	$820
11	Nash	NC	$792
12	Lowndes	GA	$790
13	Montgomery	TN	$785
14	**Lee**	**AL**	**$764**
15	Wayne	NC	$743

Rank	County	State	Share of Knowledge-based Jobs (2014)
1	Ouachita	LA	32.9%
2	Rapides	LA	31.3%
3	Floyd	GA	27.1%
4	Florence	SC	26.5%
5	Clarke	GA	26.1%
6	Warren	KY	24.7%
7	Wayne	NC	24.2%
8	Forrest	MS	23.6%
9	Houston	AL	23.1%
10	Houston	GA	23.0%
11	Montgomery	TN	22.2%
12	Nash	NC	20.3%
13	**Lowndes**	**GA**	**19.9%**
14	Morgan	AL	15.8%
15	Lee	AL	13.7%

Rank	County	State	Unemployment Rate (2014)
1T	Lee	AL	5.6%
1T	Warren	KY	5.6%
3	Wayne	NC	6.3%
4	Morgan	AL	6.6%
5T	Rapides	LA	6.7%
5T	Montgomery	TN	6.7%
7	Houston	AL	6.8%
8T	Clarke	GA	6.9%
8T	Houston	GA	6.9%
10	Ouachita	LA	7.0%
11T	Florence	SC	7.3%
11T	**Lowndes**	**GA**	**7.3%**
13	Forrest	MS	7.5%
14T	Floyd	GA	7.9%
14T	Nash	NC	7.9%

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/).

United States Military Bases www.militarybases.com
- Location of military bases

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