



# Chronicling 100 Years of the U.S. Economy

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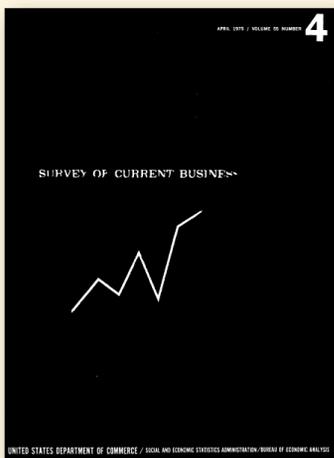
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## BEA's First Local Area Personal Income Statistics

By Ralph Rodriguez

In April 1975, the nation was emerging from a 16-month-long recession—at the time, the worst since the Great Depression. Ongoing bouts of inflation and the lingering effects of an energy crisis left no part of the country unaffected. Amidst the economic malaise of this time, the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) via the *Survey of Current Business* published, for the first time, county and metropolitan area personal income estimates from 1959 to 1973. These measures were the first of their kind to capture the income earned across areas large and small, and rural and urban, revealing in finer detail the economic landscape of America.

County and metropolitan area personal income—"the current income received by residents in an area by all sources," as defined in its inaugural publication—provided decisionmakers and researchers in the public and private sectors with a new and more complete way to track economic well-being across time and make comparisons among counties and metropolitan areas. It served to strengthen the framework used in analysis for government and business planning, the allocation of federal and local funding, theoretical and applied academic research, and more.



BY THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC MEASUREMENT DIVISION

### County and Metropolitan Area Personal Income

THIS issue of the Survey presents, for the first time, estimates of personal income for all of the Nation's SMSAs and counties, as well as for Louisiana's parishes, Alaska's census divisions, and Virginia's independent cities. Total and per capita personal income in the 216 SMSAs are shown in table 1 for 1959, 1960, 1972, and 1973. Estimates for the 2,123 counties and other local areas for 1969, 1972, and 1973 are shown in table 2.

Annual estimates of personal income by type of payment and estimates of labor and proprietors' income by major industry group are available for SMSAs and counties for selected years, 1959-73, as shown in table A. Persons interested in obtaining the more detailed estimates for a specific area should contact the Regional Economic Measurement Division of the State apparatus and universities that receive BEA's annual estimates for local areas. A list of these sources is provided in Appendix A on pages 54 and 55 of this issue.

**Definition of total and per capita personal income in the current format received by residents of an area from all sources. It is measured before distribution of income and other personal items, but after deduction of personal contributions to social security, govern-**

ment retirement, and other social insurance programs. It consists of wages and salaries (cash and in kind, tips, bonuses, and contractual contingents), various types of supplementary earnings (such as "other labor income" (the largest item being employer contributions to private pension, health, and welfare funds), but not income of owners of incorporated business firms and unincorporated businesses), and net income of independent professionals, and net income, dividends, interest,

and government and business transfer payments (including of charitably made gifts) to persons for which no services are currently rendered, such as unemployment benefits, social security payments, veterans benefits, welfare and relief payments, and contract labor (debit). With one exception, the local area income estimates are conceptually the same as those in the personal income series in the national income and product accounts. The exception is that the national accounts include income

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Pages from "County and Metropolitan Area Personal Income," which appeared in the April 1975 issue of the Survey.

BEA's dedicated professionals continue to build on these statistics nearly a half-century since the first local area income measures were developed. BEA's regional products have grown to include gross domestic product by county and metropolitan area, as well as inflation-adjusted measures for metropolitan area personal income. We hope you enjoy this look back at the first-ever local area estimates in our reprint of "[County and Metropolitan Area Personal Income](#)" from the April 1975 issue of the *Survey*.



*Survey of Current Business*  
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