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## Shine That Light

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Entrepreneurs and business owners have to constantly answer everything from where to locate a business to how much to pay employees. And in many cases, those decisions are based on

guesswork and estimates or advice from consultants, colleagues and co-workers. Many owners may not realize the federal government routinely collects, analyzes and publishes a wealth of economic data that can help shed light on the most challenging of issues so that they don't have to fumble around in the dark. We've rounded up some of the best tools to help get you started.

## A COMMUNITY OF DATA TO GUIDE YOU

Every community is a distinct, vibrant microcosm of activity that can be seen in social, economic, housing and demographic data.

That's why the U.S. Census Bureau publishes the [American Community Survey \(ACS\)](#), a rich portfolio of tools that [can help entrepreneurs and business owners](#). For example, if trying to decide where to place a bricks-and-mortar business, critical data on customers and their spending habits is available, as well as data on potential competitors. This toolset can help any professional who needs to make data-driven decisions, like a health administrator or city planner.

[Learn more about the ACS tools](#) and which ones best meet your need.

## HOW IS THE U.S. ECONOMY BEHAVING?

It's no secret that the performance of the U.S. economy can have a profound effect on even the most local of businesses.

That's why the Economics and

Statistics Administration (ESA) releases up-to-date data on how the U.S. economy is behaving — known as [Economic Indicators](#) — to help business owners strategize and plan for the here and now, as well as the future. Wondering how to make sense out of this kind of data? [Make plans to attend one or more of these regularly scheduled Economic Indicator Webinars](#), and you'll learn how these behaviors could be relevant to your business.

## WHAT LABOR STATISTICS CAN TELL YOU

They say no man (or woman) is an island. The same can be said for businesses. After all, every growing business can use current data on human resources, organized labor and work

stoppages to inform their grand plan. That's why the U.S. Department of Labor's treasure of labor statistics is so useful to business owners. Read through these insightful statistics to gain valuable knowledge about matters that affect day-to-day success, including employment, wage trends, or what employee compensation truly costs an employer.

## YOUR CUSTOMERS AND THEIR MONEY

Every business owner needs to know their customers and what makes them tick. But how many businesses are really looking into the spending habits of their customers and if consumers have the money to buy the services or products offered for sale? The U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) gives business owners [a treasure trove of consumer and GDP data](#). National, regional, international and industry data is available. [Be sure to check out this amazing interactive resource](#).

## TWITTER HIGHLIGHTS

Here are a few of our top tweets from the past week:

Young #entrepreneurs: Check out these resources including local assistance centers, online resources & more.

Women are Leading Rise of Black-Owned #Businesses.

Over 50 and want to start a #business? Check out @SBAGov's Encore #Entrepreneurs program.

New platforms make @USPTO's #data easier to find, use, visualize & manipulate.

High-tech instruments industry will see benefits from #TPP once it is passed.

Interested in getting all of our BusinessUSA business advice and news from our Twitter stream in one, easy-to-read email? Sign up for the [BusinessUSA Twitter digest](#).

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