

# County Economies 2016

Widespread Recovery,  
Slower Growth

To access the companion interactive maps, individualized county pdf profiles and others, go to [www.NACo.org/CountyEconomies](http://www.NACo.org/CountyEconomies)

## Key Terms

**Average Real Wages:** Total wages and salaries paid by industries located within a county relative to the number of jobs within that county. The estimates are adjusted for inflation and expressed in chained 2009 dollars. 2016 data are forecasts. *Data Source: NACo analysis of Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2016 Data*

**Average Real Wage Growth Rate:** Year-over-year growth rate of average real wages in a county economy. *Data Source: NACo analysis of Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2016 Data*

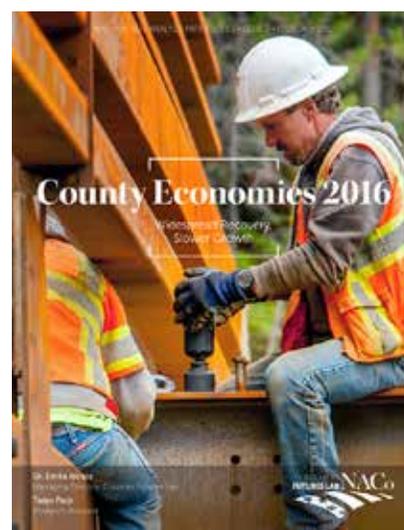
**Annualized Growth Rate:** Year-over-year growth rate of an indicator (economic output (GDP), jobs or home prices) over a specified period of time, showing how much an indicator would have grown annually if it increased at a steady rate over a certain period. The growth rates of county economic output (GDP) and average wages are inflation-adjusted.

**County:** The primary legal division of most states for which the U.S. Census Bureau releases data. This is the geography of an area with county boundaries. In Louisiana, a county is known as a

parish. In Alaska, a county is known as a borough. According to the U.S. Office of Management (OMB), there are 3,143 counties in the United States.

**County Economy:** The economy of a county with county government.

**County Government:** An organized entity with governmental character, having sufficient discretion in the management of its own affairs to be an independent government unit and which covers the area of a county or county equivalent. Depending on the state, county governments are also known as a parish government or a borough government. NACo considers an entity to be a county government if it is recognized as a county government under the state constitution, state law or by charter. This includes 42 counties that are city-county consolidations, the District of Columbia, incorporated counties (Los Alamos, Nevada) and independent cities that are considered county governments under their state constitution (Baltimore City, Maryland; St. Louis City, Missouri) or city charter (Carson City, Nevada). There are 3,069 county governments in the United States.



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**Economic Output (gross domestic product - GDP):** Total value of goods and services produced by a county economy, also known as GDP. 2016 data are forecasts. *Data Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2016 Data*

**Industry Employment:** Total number of jobs at 2 digit NAICS level aggregation. The County Economies 2016 individualized county profiles show for agriculture and public administration the number of jobs of their 3 digit NAICS components. All industry job numbers below 1,000 are rounded to the closest 10 on the individualized profiles. *Data Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2016 Data*

**Jobs:** Total number of wage and salary jobs, whether full or part-time, temporary or permanent in a county economy. It counts the number of jobs, not employed people, for all employers in a county economy, not only for the county government. 2016 data are forecasts. *Data source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2016 Data*

**Large County Economies:** The economies of counties with more than 500,000 residents in 2015. *Data Source: Census Population Estimates, 2015 vintage*

**Median Home Sales Prices:** Median sales prices of existing single-family homes in a county economy. 2016 data are forecasts. *Data source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2016 Data*

**Medium-sized County Economies:** The economies of counties with populations between 50,000 and 500,000 in 2015. *Data Source: Census Population Estimates, 2015 vintage*

**Peak:** The highest annual value of a county economy indicator (the lowest for the unemployment rate) between

2002 and 2009. 2002 is the first year after the end of the previous U.S. recession and 2009 marks the end of the latest U.S. recession. The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) determines the beginning and end of U.S. economic recessions. This analysis determines peak values and years separately for each county economy and each indicator.

**Population:** The number of county residents in 2015. *Data Source: Census Population Estimates, 2015 vintage*

**Real Economic Output (real GDP):** Total gross output of a county economy adjusted for inflation. The estimates are in chained 2009 dollars. 2016 data are forecasts. *Data source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2016 Data*

**Recession:** The period between the peak and the trough years for an indicator for a county economy during the latest U.S. economic downturn. This research counts a recession only when the difference between the peak and the trough value is larger than one percent of the peak value. It is possible that no recession occurred for an indicator in some county economies during the latest U.S. economic downturn. This analysis determines recession start and end years separately for each county economy and each indicator.

**Recovery:** The period between the trough year to 2016 for an indicator for a county economy, to identify the period of growth after recessionary declines. If a county economy had no recession on a specific indicator, the recovery period is counted from 2009 to 2016. It is possible that a county economy had declines on one or more of the indicators analyzed and has not yet entered the recovery period for some of those indicators by 2016. This analysis determines recovery

start and end years separately for each county economy and each indicator.

**Recovered on an indicator:** A county economy recovered on an economic indicator if it underwent a recession on that specific indicator and subsequently grew to reach or exceed its pre-recession peak.

**Small County Economies:** The economies of counties with fewer than 50,000 residents in 2015. *Data Source: Census Population Estimates, 2015 vintage*

**Specialized Industry:** An industry that is more concentrated in a particular county economy compared to the state's overall industry job composition. The County Economies 2016 individualized county profiles show the top five industries in the county economy in terms of employment location quotient. *Data source: NACo analysis of Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2016 Data*

**Trough:** The lowest annual value of a county economy indicator (the highest for the unemployment rate) between the peak and 2016. This analysis determines trough values and years separately for each county economy and each indicator.

**Unemployment Rate:** The proportion of the civilian labor force that is unemployed in a county economy. Persons are classified as unemployed if they do not have a job, have actively looked for work in the prior four weeks and are currently available for work. 2016 data are forecasts. *Data source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2016 Data*