

Handout for March 2018 Newsletter
Mapping Average Hourly Earnings and Burdened Households in GeoFRED®

Purpose.

1. Create a state-level geographical map of average hourly earnings and a county-level map of the percent of “burdened” households.
2. Edit the maps by modifying their colors.
3. Interpret the economic information displayed in the maps.

Pedagogical Rationale. This assignment requires that you first search for data online, select a particular series, and display it in the form of a geographical map. Next, you will edit the format of the map. Lastly, you will interpret the economic information displayed in the map. These tasks will develop your proficiency in searching for, manipulating, and interpreting data.

Grading. Your grade will be determined by (a) how precisely you complete the search and transformation data tasks and (b) how accurately you interpret the data.

Steps to Search for and Transform the Data.

1. Access <https://geofred.stlouisfed.org> and click on “Build New Map.”
2. Click on “Tools” and under “CHOOSE DATA > Region Type:” select “State.”
3. Click on “Data:” and select “Average Hourly Earnings of All Employees: Total Private” and “Not Seasonally Adjusted, Annual, Dollars per Hour.”
4. Click on “CHOOSE COLORS” and select from “Multi Hue,” the right-most color scheme from the second row (tagged “ylorrd”).
5. Open a new browser tab.
6. Access <https://geofred.stlouisfed.org> and click on “Build New Map.” Click on “Tools” and under “CHOOSE DATA > Region Type:” select “County.”
7. Click on “Data:” and select “Burdened Households,” “Not Seasonally Adjusted, Annual, Percent.”
8. Click on “CHOOSE COLORS” and select from “Multi Hue,” the right-most color scheme from the second row (tagged “ylorrd”).

Discussion Prompts. Answer the following questions:

1. Name 4 states, in addition to the District of Columbia, reporting the highest (\$28 per hour and above) average hourly earnings of all employees.
 2. Notice the geographical location of counties where more than 1/3 (33% and above) of the households are considered “burdened” because they pay more than 30 percent of their income for rent or mortgage expenses. Are they concentrated? On the coasts?
 3. Briefly explain why the answers to questions 1 and 2 tend to be similar.
- (EXTRA CREDIT) Consider the states of Florida, South Carolina, and North Carolina. Do they fit the pattern you described? Why or why not?