A Guide to Availability Sources for Diversity Projects

Diversity metrics, like AAP analyses, require identifying an availability source and calculating a benchmark. For the United States, there are a few benchmarking options to explore, each with advantages and disadvantages that need to be considered in the decision-making process.

Most common availability sources include:

American Community Survey (ACS) 2014-2018 Industry

This is a subset of data narrowed to specific industries of interest. For example, Finance and Healthcare is one of the available industries within the ACS collection.

Advantages

A relevant source given the industry match and the source data is provided at an occupation level. This is the most commonly used source for identifying availability.

Disadvantages

The data is dated given it is a survey covering 2014-2018 occupation information and not all industries are available.

EEO-1 Reports

This data is collected annually and made publicly available in the aggregate. The data is provided by its North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code level, as well as by year and geographical area.

Advantages

The occupational data available is more recent than the ACS data, although still a couple years dated.

Disadvantages

The data is broadly aggregated at an EEO-1 category level and not specifically tied to an occupation.*

*e.g., Finance professionals and Human Resources professionals are reported together despite very different availabilities for women and race/ethnicity

IPEDS NCES

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data can be accessed through the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The data query can be customized to meet your project needs (e.g., discipline, degree, year).

Advantages

This data is useful for projected occupational growth areas where data may be new or for jobs that require tenure and specific credentials (e.g., professor).

Disadvantages

There may need to be additional time built in for researching and identifying the correct subset of data to use. Also, it is most useful for new hire data for jobs requiring a college degree.

Source data is not created equally and will differ on things such as: **specificity, recency, and usability.**

In addition to the data considerations, there are also business constraints to weigh, such as: **cost, time, and resources (e.g., staff).** How much is available may change with each project.

First, identify the goal of the project, and then decide on the appropriate availability source to accomplish that goal.

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