Kevin L. McKinney

Economist

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Professional Summary

Economist with 27 years experience developing new economic data sources, conducting published labor market research and implementing innovative confidentiality methods. Part of a team that created the Census Bureau's LEHD data; the first large-scale administrative linked employer-employee research dataset covering the U.S. labor market. Developed new methods to both complete missing data and assess the impact of the imputations on released estimates. Conducted published labor market research with a focus on measuring earnings inequality, volatility, and mobility. Created and implemented noise infusion methods allowing for the public release of new estimates on undergraduate long-term earnings. My body of work encompasses the entire research pipeline from the production and analysis of new data to the release of statistics using modern disclosure avoidance methods.

Competencies

Composition: Technical Reports, Academic Papers

Data Creation: Big Data Processing, Bayesian Imputation

Econometrics: Fixed and Mixed-Effects Estimation, Total Error Measures, Noise Infusion, Differential Privacy

Software: BASH shell scripting, SAS, Stata, R, Julia, Fortran

Experience

Economist: U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics Program | September 1999 to July 2026 | Economist GS-12 September 1999 to October 2001, GS-13 November 2001 to November 2013 | Senior Economist GS-14 December 2013 to July 2022 | Principal Economist GS-15 August 2022 to July 2026 | Suitland, MD and Los Angeles, CA

Earnings Volatility (2022): Multiple research teams, one for each data source, estimated trends in male earnings volatility using the SIPP, CPS, and LEHD data. Each team applied a consistent estimation approach across the various data sources. We showed that volatility was either flat or decreasing for males from 1998 to 2016 across all sources, reconciling differences found in previous research.

Global Repository of Income Dynamics (2022): Participated in the creation of a publicly accessible database of income dynamics/inequality measures for 13 countries. Produced new research showing that median earnings differences in a single year significantly underestimate long-term earnings inequality. Inequality measures must include periods of labor market inactivity, which differ significantly across demographic groups.

Total Error and Variability (2021): Created the first comprehensive analysis of total error and variability for LEHD public use products. Unlike survey data, LEHD data has almost no sampling variability. However, person and/or firm characteristics are imputed and to protect the confidentiality of the respondents noise is added to the estimates. We show that tabulations involving 10 or more jobs are reliable and have a worst-case median coefficient of variation of 16% for education, which is 80% imputed.

Earnings Inequality (2018): Estimated fixed person and firm effect models for virtually all jobs in the U.S. labor market active sometime between 2004 to 2013 inclusive (over two billion person-firm-year observations). Showed how differential sorting of high skill workers into high paying firms exacerbates earnings inequality. A high-skill worker at a high-paying firm earns $51K more per year than a high-skill worker at a middle-paying firm.

Worker Flows (2007): In practice the definition of a firm is fluid, complicating the measurement of worker job-to-job mobility. Firms merge with other firms, sell a portion of their operations, buy portions of other firms, and change ownership. Developed algorithms to detect spurious worker flow events and limit their impact on LEHD statistics.

Economic Consulting: Aces Research | 2025 | Los Angeles, CA

Economic Consulting: Cornell University | 2005 to 2013 | Ithaca, NY

Economic Consulting: Urban Institute | 2004 | Washington DC

Earned Degrees

B.A. University of California, Irvine, 1989

M.A. University of California, Santa Barbara, 1992

Ph.D. University of California, Santa Barbara, 2000

Fields of Concentration

Primary Field:	Labor Economics
Secondary Fields:	Econometrics and Public Finance

Dissertation Title

"Three Essays on Mexican American Educational Attainment"
Committee Chair: Professor Stephen J. Trejo

Teaching Experience

Lecturer: Upper Division Microeconomics, Fall, 1993 - Fall, 1994, International Trade, Summer 1994.

Teaching Assistant: Introductory Microeconomics & Introductory Macroeconomics, Academic Years 1991-93, 95-96.

Academic Papers

"Estimating the Potential Impact of Combined Race and Ethnicity Reporting on Long-Term Earnings Statistics," with John Abowd, Race, Ethnicity, and Economic Statistics for the 21st Century (eds. Randall Akee, Lawrence F. Katz, and Mark A. Loewenstein), 2026.

"Mixed Effects Methods for Search and Matching Research," with John Abowd, *Revue Economique*, 2024.

"Reconciling Trends in U.S. Male Earnings Volatility: Results from Survey and Administrative Data," with John Abowd, Christopher Bollinger, Michael Carr, Chales Hokayem, Robert Moffitt, Emily Wiemers, Sisi Zhang, and James Ziliak, *Journal of Business and Economic Statistics*, 2022.

"Male Earnings Volatility in LEHD before, during, and after the Great Recession," with John Abowd, *Journal of Business and Economic Statistics*, 2022.

"U.S. Long-Term Earnings outcomes by Sex, Race, Ethnicity, and Place of Birth," with John Abowd and Hubert Janicki, *Quantitative Economics*, 2022.

“United States Earnings Dynamics: Inequality, Mobility, and Volatility,” with John Abowd and John Sabelhaus, Measuring Distribution and Mobility of Income and Wealth (eds. Raj Chetty, John Friedman, Janet Gornick, Barry Johnson, Arthur Kennickell), 2022.

“Total Error and Variability Measures for the Quarterly Workforce Indicators and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics in On the Map,” with Andrew Green, Lars Vilhuber, and John Abowd, *Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology*, 2021.

“Modeling Endogenous Mobility in Wage Determination,” with John M Abowd and Ian M. Schmutte, *Journal of Business and Economic Statistics*, 2019.

“Releasing Earnings Distributions Using Differential Privacy: Disclosure Avoidance System for Post-Secondary Employment Outcomes (PSEO),” with Andrew Foote and Ashwin Machanavajjhala, *Journal of Privacy and Confidentiality*, 2019.

“Earnings Inequality and Mobility Trends in the United States: Nationally Representative Estimates from Longitudinally Linked Employer-Employee Data,” with John Abowd and Nellie Zhao, *Journal of Labor Economics*, 2018.

“Noise Infusion as a Confidentiality Protection Measure for Graph-Based Statistics,” with John M Abowd, *Journal of the International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS)*, 2016.

“Persistent Inter-Industry Wage Differences: Rent Sharing and Opportunity Costs,” with John Abowd, Francis Kramarz, Paul Lengermann, and Sebastien Roux, *IZA Journal of Labor Economics*, 2012.

“Matching, Reallocation, and Changes in Earnings Dispersion,” with Simon Burgess and Julia Lane, *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, 2009.

“Using Worker Flows to Measure Firm Dynamics,” with Gary Benedetto, John Haltiwanger and Julia Lane, *Journal of Business and Economic Statistics*, 2007.

“The Link Between Human Capital, Mass Layoffs and Firm Deaths,” with John M Abowd and Lars Vilhuber, Producer Dynamics: New Evidence from Micro Data (eds. Timotht Dunne, J. Bradford Jensen, and Mark Roberts), University of Chicago Press, 2007.

“The LEHD Infrastructure Files and the Creation of the Quarterly Workforce Indicators,” with John M Abowd and Bryce E. Stephens, Producer Dynamics: New Evidence from Micro Data (eds. Timotht Dunne, J. Bradford Jensen, and Mark Roberts), University of Chicago Press, 2007.

“The Relationship Between Human Capital, Productivity and Market Value: Building Up from Microeconomic Evidence,” with John Abowd, John Haltiwanger, Ron Jarmin, Julia Lane, Paul Lengermann, Kristin McCue, and Kristin Sandusky, in Measuring Capital in the New Economy (eds. Carol Corrado, John Haltiwanger and Daniel Sichel), University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Work in Progress / Recent Working Papers

“Detecting Person Identifier Misuse: Understanding the Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics (LEHD) Pseudo-PIK Process”, with Stephen Tibbets, CES Technical Notes Series, 2026.

“Understanding the Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics (LEHD) Linked-Job Identifier (FID), with Stephen Tibbets, CES Technical Notes Series, 2026.