Data Resources for Local Budget Forecasters

Internet resources are available to help local governments forecast future revenues. These resources are reliable inputs for a broad range of revenue forecasting models.

**Washington State Department of Revenue** ([www.dor.wa.gov](http://www.dor.wa.gov)):
- Click on “Get Statistics and Reports” on the front page.
- Click “Create a Report” on the right side to access the interactive query system. This system provides access to data on:
  - Gross business income
  - Taxable retail sales
  - Local tax distributions
  - Historical local tax rates
  - B&O and Public Utility taxes.

**Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council** ([www.erfc.wa.gov](http://www.erfc.wa.gov)):
- The Forecast Council’s website has a wide variety of descriptive statistics for Washington State. Some of these are forecasted into the future.
- Click on “Economic Forecast” then “Summary.” The second page of the publication has forecasted values for income, wages, employment, inflation, and many other useful variables for revenue forecasting.

**Employment Security Department** ([www.workforceexplorer.com](http://www.workforceexplorer.com)):
- Workforce Explorer is a rich data source with county and sometimes city level detail.
- Click on “WA Labor Market” (among the buttons at the top) then on “local area profile” (on the right-hand side under “Economic Information?”).
-This system retrieves county-level statistics relating to employment and income.
-There is other useful data such as population data and the most local consumer price index available.
-Return to the front page and click on “Data Analyst” under “Quick Links.”
-“Current Estimates” (under “Nonfarm Industry Employment”) has historical employment data by location and industry.
-“Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages” has employment and wages by location and industry.

**Office of Financial Management** ([www.ofm.wa.gov](http://www.ofm.wa.gov)):

- The Office of Financial Management's website has a wide variety of descriptive statistics ranging from population to crime rates. It also has a series of “budget driver” statistics designed to help forecast future expenditures.

- Click on Population->Estimates and Forecasts. Click on “Official April 1, 2007 Estimates.”
  - This area contains information on the official population forecasts used to distribute local sales taxes.
  - Item 3 gives the official population by location for current and previous periods.

- Click on Research & Data->Washington Trends
  - This area contains a large selection of descriptive statistics.
  - The “budget drivers” section contains useful variables for forecasting expenditures. These include public school enrollment, income assistance caseload, and the prison population.