

Economic Tracker How-To Guide

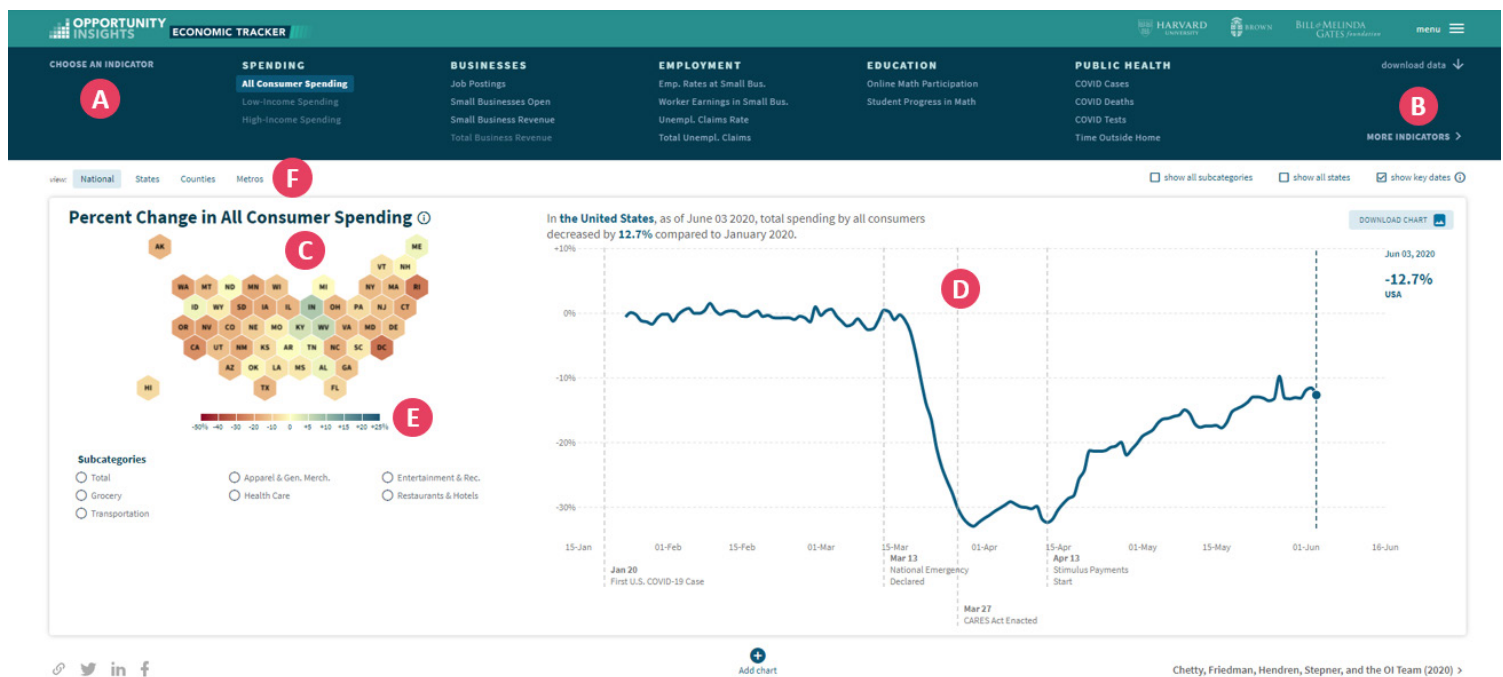
This guide provides explanations for the features included in the tool. Key terms are defined briefly below, followed by more detailed descriptions of each component of the tracker.

You can find a technical description of how the data in the tool was constructed [here](#). Please feel free to contact us with any questions at info@opportunityinsights.org.

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE TRACKER

Indicators: The indicator is the metric you will explore. Some indicators can be broken out into more granular categories, called subcategories.

Geographies: The geography is the place you will explore. You can view your indicator at the national, state, and county level, as well as for some metro areas.



(1) CHOOSING AN INDICATOR

The indicator is the metric you will explore.

Indicators are divided into six categories - Employment, Spending, Business, Education, Public Health, and Earnings - and are listed (A) along the top of the screen. To view the full list of indicators, select the "More Indicators" (B) option on the right. Select an indicator to display corresponding data on the map (C) on the left side of the screen, and the graph (D) on the right.

(2) INTERPRETING THE MAP

The map shows how your selected indicator varies across places.

The colors on the map represent the values of the indicator you've selected and are displayed on a range from red to blue. Areas that are shaded in blue are doing better in terms of the indicator you've selected, and areas shown in red are doing worse.

Hover over a region with your cursor to display the value of the indicator for that place. The legend (E) is below the graph and shows the values that correspond to each color. You may notice that the complete color spectrum is not consistently displayed for each time period that is mapped. This is because the color scale is determined using the full range of values that each indicator takes over time, from the earliest available date to the most recent.

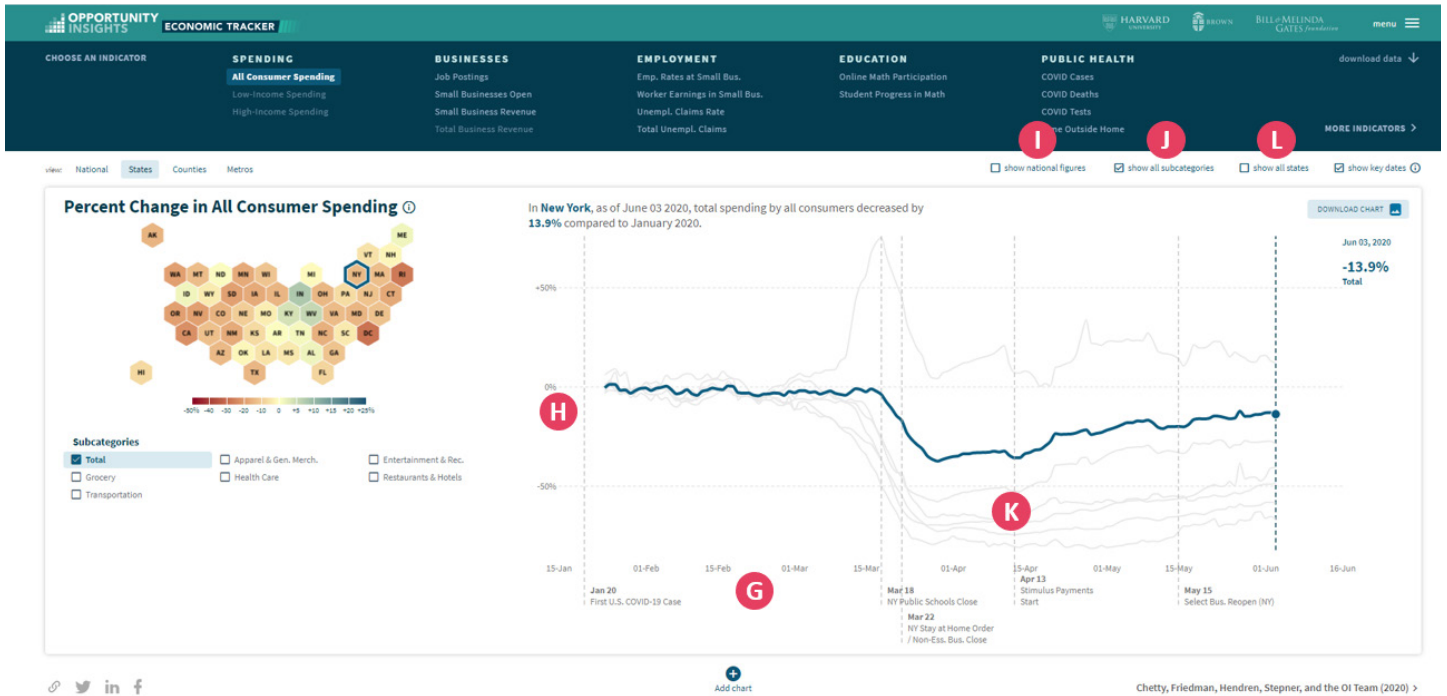
The map displays four geographic levels: National, State, County and Metro. Toggle between these views by selecting them from the menu (F) above the map. Note that in order to explore counties within a particular state, you must first select the state using the “States” option.

(3) INTERPRETING THE GRAPH

The graph shows how your selected indicator has changed over time and across places.

The graph populates based on your selections for (1) and (2), plotting the change over time for the indicators and geographies you select. The horizontal axis (G) shows time, with the date labelled every two weeks, and the vertical axis (H) shows the change in your selected indicator since we began tracking it. Thus, for each indicator and geography, the graph allows you to explore how much and in which direction the indicator has changed since January.

The graph automatically plots your selected indicator for whichever geography you’ve selected on the map. When the map is set to the “National” view, the nationwide average for your selected indicator is plotted in blue. When the map is set to the “States” view, your selected indicator for your selected state is plotted in blue. To add the nationwide average, select “show national figures” (I) and the nationwide average will be plotted in gray. When the map is set to the “Counties” view, your selected indicator for your selected county is plotted in blue. To add the statewide average as a benchmark, select “show state figures,” and the statewide average will be plotted in gray. When the map is in the “Metros” view, your selected indicator for your selected metro area is plotted in blue. To add the nationwide average, select “show national figures” and the nationwide average will be plotted in gray.



You can compare up to three geographies using the graph by selecting them on the map. Select an additional geography - either a state, county, or metro, depending on the view you’re in - and your selected indicator will be plotted for that geography. The splash stats will also update to show your selected indicator for each of your selected geographies. The splash stats will indicate which color line corresponds to which geography.

You can use the graph to explore additional data using the “show all subcategories” (J) feature. Select the “show all subcategories” option to add gray background lines (K) that plot each subcategory of your indicator. Subcategories (described in more detail below) of the indicators allow you to explore the data with more granularity. Hover over any line to see which subcategory it represents.

Select “show all states,” “show all counties,” or “show all metros” (L) to add gray background lines that plot your selected indicator for each geography shown on the map - either states, counties, or metros. This feature enables you to compare your indicator across places over time. Hover over any line to see which geography it represents.

ADDITIONAL GRAPH FEATURES

The graph features multiple add-ons that, while not essential to basic usage, may enhance your analysis.

VERTICAL TIMEKEEPER

The vertical, dotted line (M) allows you to pinpoint the value of your selected indicator at specific points in time. It is set by default to the most recent date for which data are available. Hover or click elsewhere on the timeline to explore your selected indicator at different points in time. The map automatically updates to show data for whichever point in time you select.

SPLASH STATS

The statistics (N) shown at the right of the graph summarize the change in your indicator since January 2020. As you explore your indicator at different points in time, the splash stats will automatically update to show your selected indicator for any date indicated by the vertical timekeeper. You can see which date is currently displayed in the top right above the splash stats.

KEY DATES

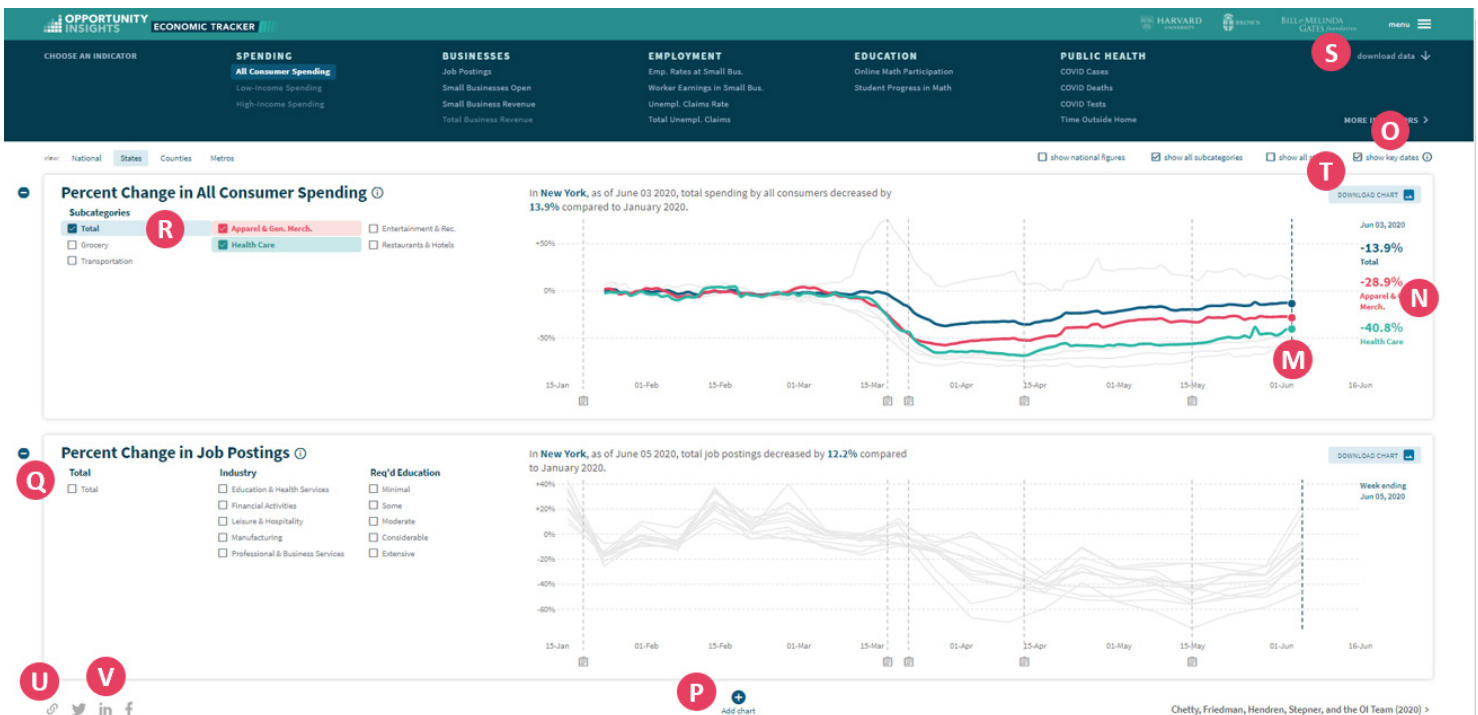
The graph is automatically overlaid with “Key Dates,” which help to contextualize the data displayed in the graph. If you prefer to remove these dates, deselect the “show key dates” (N) box in the top right corner.

ADVANCED FEATURES

These additional features enable you to use the tracker for more advanced analysis.

ADD CHART

The “Add Chart” (P) feature makes it easier to compare multiple indicators at once. Select the “Add Chart” option to display a second or third indicator. Any manipulation to one dataset will be reproduced in the other(s), enabling you to explore datasets simultaneously by moving the vertical timekeeper to different points on the timeline, and/or, by selecting different geographies on the map. To remove any of the indicators you have added, click the minus sign (Q) to the left of the map.



SUBCATEGORIES

The “Subcategories” feature allows you to explore your indicator with more granularity within a selected geography by breaking out your indicator into different subcategories. For example, data on job postings are available by different industries and educational requirements. Not all indicators have a “Subcategories” option. When “Subcategories” (R) are available, they are listed below the map. (Note that subcategories are not available when multiple charts are displayed.)

ON THE MAP

The map displays data for your selected subcategory. For example, if you select the “Job Postings” indicator along with the “Extensive” subcategory from the Menu labelled “Required Education,” then the map will display data only for those job postings which require extensive education. The map will automatically rescale to the range of values for the selected subcategory.

ON THE GRAPH

When you select a subcategory from the menu below the map, the graph plots data for your selected subcategory. Select “show all subcategories” to view data for each subcategory at once. With this feature selected, the gray background lines each represent a subcategory, and the blue line represents the aggregate indicator. Hover over a line to see which subcategory it plots.

With the “show all subcategories” feature selected, you can highlight up to three subcategories of interest by selecting them from the menu below the map. As you select additional subcategories, their lines will be highlighted in a different color. The splash stats will update to display the values of each of your selected subcategories. The splash stats will also indicate which color line corresponds to which subcategory.

DOWNLOADING AND SHARING

Discover something interesting? Use these features to download or share your analysis.

DOWNLOAD DATA

Use the “Download Data” (S) feature to download the data to use for your own analyses. Selecting this option will redirect you to a Github page where you can download the data as a .csv file.

DOWNLOAD CHART

Use the “Download Chart” (T) feature to download an image of the chart as it appears on your screen as a .png file.

DEEP LINK

Use the “Deep Link” (U) feature to generate a link to the tracker as it appears on your screen. The link will be automatically copied to your clipboard for you to share elsewhere.

SOCIAL BUTTONS

The Tracker features social buttons (V) for Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook. Click one of the social buttons to share the tracker as it appears on your screen to your social media accounts.

CONTACT

Requests for additional information on the data or technical questions can be directed to info@opportunityinsights.org.

We'd love to hear how you're using our tool to inform the economic recovery in your community. Tweet us @ [Opplnsights](#) or email us to tell us more.

ABOUT OPPORTUNITY INSIGHTS

Opportunity Insights is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization located at Harvard University that seeks to translate insights from rigorous, scientific research to policy change by harnessing the power of “big data” using an interdisciplinary approach.