Tasks Overview

Sample Predoc Data Task

1. Labor Market Analysis Task

   - Time: Spend no more than 5 hours on this task
   - File: cps_wages_LFP.zip contains a stata .dta file (and duplicate .csv) from the U.S. Current Population Survey since 1976.[1] It provides individual-level data on year, state, month, survey weight, demographic characteristics, and labor market outcomes.
   - Goal: We'd like you to use these data to produce your best answer to the following question: how have hourly wages ("wage") and labor force participation ("lfp") evolved for skilled and unskilled workers since 1976?
     (a) Please summarize the key trends for wages and labor force participation.
     (b) Among men older than age 25, which groups of people have had the biggest changes in labor force participation?
     (c) What factors do you think are driving these patterns? What evidence might you want to assemble to test these hypotheses if you were to investigate them further?
   - Output:
     (a) Please provide a short note in .pdf format that concisely answers these questions. Please be sure to include a few graphs and/or tables to support your conclusions.
     (b) Please provide the code that you used to produce these figures and/or tables.
   - Note: You should feel free to use whatever techniques you want. The goal here is not to show off hi-tech econometrics, but rather to show us how you think about data. Sometimes something as simple as a graph can do more for an argument than all the estimators in the world.

2. Data Manipulation Task

   - Time: No limit; complete as quickly as you can without sacrificing quality (e.g., it is worth spending 5 minutes "commenting" your code so we can understand it.)
   - File: Medicare_Advantage.zip
     – The zip archive Medicare_Advantage.zip contains a document called Medicare Advantage Instructions.pdf that describes the task in detail. You will need to take the data in scp-1205.csv and perform some simple manipulations. You are welcome to use whatever tool you like for this.

[1] Extracted from `https://cps.ipums.org/cps/`.