INFM 600 - Information Seeking Project 1 - Datasets

# 1. 2016 National Bridge Inventory

**Resource(s):**

US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). (2017). *2016 National Bridge Inventory*. [Data files for bridges inventory of all states]. Available from Federal Highway Administration website: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/nbi/ascii2016.cfm>

**License details:**

I believe this is open data with no restrictions due to government transparency and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). After a thorough search of the FHWA website, I found no disclaimers or terms of use policy. The only reference to data usage is located at the bottom of <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/nbi/ascii.cfm>, and it’s mostly just download instructions.

**Dataset description:**

This data set lists all bridges and underpasses in the United States, organized by state. Statistics include each bridge’s location, build date, last inspection date, reconstruction date(s), history of issues and repairs, cost of repairs and many other codes and data. Our country’s aging infrastructure has been a prominent discussion point in pre-election debates and with the nation’s leaders. Knowledge from information analysis would benefit federal, state and local budget decision makers who prioritize financial allocations. Emergency preparedness and response organizations need foresight from this data to adequately support local citizens.

**Questions:**

1. Which bridges in which states could be most at risk for structural damage from normal wear and tear, and from natural disasters like hurricanes, earthquakes, and heavy snow events?
2. Which states have the most bridges in need of repair?
3. What is the average age of all bridges in the country and in each state?

**2. Money Borrowed from Unemployment Trust Fund to Pay State Unemployment Benefits**

**Resources:**

US Department of the Treasury. (2017). *Title XII Advance Activities Schedule (2017).* [Data of money borrowed by states for unemployment benefits]. Available from Department of the Treasury website: <https://www.transparency.treasury.gov/dataset/title-xii-advance-activities-schedule/table-view>

US Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Beta Labs. (2017). BLS Data Finder 1.0 [Provides links to unemployment statistics for US states and territories show rates and unemployment totals]. Available from [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov): [https://beta.bls.gov/dataQuery/find?st=0&r=20&s=popularity%3AD&fq=survey:[la]&fq=mg:[Measure+Category]&fq=cg:[Geography]&fq=cc:[States+and+Territories]&fq=mc:[Unemployed]&fq=mcd:[Unemployed]&fq=mg:[Measure+Attributes]&fq=mg:[Measure+Published+By]&more=0](https://beta.bls.gov/dataQuery/find?st=0&r=20&s=popularity%3AD&fq=survey:%5bla%5d&fq=mg:%5bMeasure+Category%5d&fq=cg:%5bGeography%5d&fq=cc:%5bStates+and+Territories%5d&fq=mc:%5bUnemployed%5d&fq=mcd:%5bUnemployed%5d&fq=mg:%5bMeasure+Attributes%5d&fq=mg:%5bMeasure+Published+By%5d&more=0)

**License Details:**

Transparency.treasury.gov reports in their vision statement, located on their About Us page at <https://www.transparency.treasury.gov/article/about-us>, that the data presented on their website is meant to be open data datasets. The only restriction noted, is in an FAQ answer stating users cannot edit the financial data.

BLS provides open data datasets as stated from their website, “From junior high to college and beyond, students and teachers can use BLS to aid in their homework and course planning. Students can use our data in their career exploration and to help with their homework,” located at <https://www.bls.gov/audience/students.htm>.

**Dataset Description:**

This dataset contains the FY17 report of all the US states that have borrowed money from the federal Unemployment Trust Fund to pay unemployment benefits to their states’ citizens. Key data columns include: advanced authorization amount, gross advanced draws, outstanding advance amount, interest rate amount and interest billed for the fiscal year. This dataset would be interesting to compare with data from the Department of Labor about unemployment percentages by state and the unemployment benefits paid our per state. Results of this information analysis helps federal legislators to make budgetary decisions about government funding. The nation’s constituents may use the knowledge to make informed decisions about their leaders when voting for public offices.

**Questions:**

1. Which states have the highest unemployment rates?
2. Which states borrow the most money from federal funding to pay out unemployment benefits?
3. Are the states with the most unemployed citizens the same states that are borrowing funds?

**3. US Food Imports**

**Resources:**

US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service. (2017). *U.S. Food Imports* (2016) [Data set of imported food by country]. Available from USDA website: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/us-food-imports.aspx>

**License Details:**

This data is public domain open data.

**Dataset Description:**

This dataset provides a list of foods imported from other countries from 1999 to 2014. Key data includes import amounts by dollar value and by volume, as well import country and Harmonized System (HS) code. The information could be of interest to legislators in charge of trade regulations, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), including the CDC, as well as nutrition and budget conscious US citizens. HHS and the CDC might use the data to forecast or pinpoint potential contaminants or insect species that may be introduced and pose a threat to our environment. Many consumers like to be aware of the origin of the foods they eat. Additionally, health of political foreign relations may impact the prices of imported foods.

**Questions:**

1. Which foods are being imported in the highest volumes and from which countries?
2. What was the average cost of food imports during the 15 years reported?
3. Are the foods we’ve imported from other countries available from US sources?