



By Daniel Pollack

In every aspect, globalization and the Internet have rapidly changed the century's first decade. Consequently, the 21st century's second decade will reshape the way jobs, benefits and labor law are perceived. Departments of human services, and the attorneys working for and with them, will have to know not only what the law presently requires, but also how the law will apply to fast-changing trends. Developing new policies, constructing appropriate training, and anticipating legislative and case law directions are just a few examples of what departments will need to address.

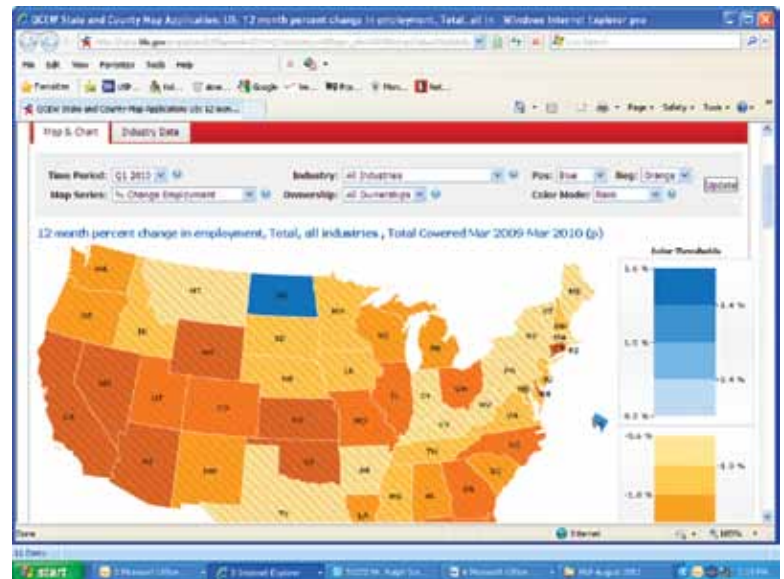
During the present period of high unemployment, significant legal changes have taken place, mostly intended to provide extended benefits for claimants and to overhaul precarious federal and state trust funds. The ultimate goal is to put federal and state governments in a solvent, positive fiscal position to weather inevitable economic declines. Generally, governments are trying to keep benefits at a level that rises apace with average wages. Arriving at an exact formula is where the compromising comes into play. To what extent should businesses be further taxed to pay for increased benefits? How effective and how much

money should be spent on training programs designed to move unemployed workers into jobs that have a real chance of being permanent? Against a background of rapid technological change and looming state budget crises (to say nothing of the federal bud-

get crisis), lawmakers are faced with trying to address rate adjustments, benefit levels and other policy changes.

One very helpful tool—still in its beta stage—for human service department planners and attorneys, is the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Employment and Wages State and County Map, accessible at <http://beta.bls.gov/maps/cew/us/>. It provides a

wealth of timely data viewable by state and by county regarding employment trends across all industries. The two maps shown here give you an idea of



## A Tool to Help Track Employment Trends

how useful this tool can be. The first map (at top) shows the total change in employment for the entire United States ([http://beta.bls.gov/maps/cew/US?period=2010-Q1&industry=10&geo\\_id=US000&chartData=3&distribution=Quantiles&pos\\_color=blue&neg\\_color=orange&showHideChart=hide](http://beta.bls.gov/maps/cew/US?period=2010-Q1&industry=10&geo_id=US000&chartData=3&distribution=Quantiles&pos_color=blue&neg_color=orange&showHideChart=hide)); the second provides this same information for the state of Colorado ([http://beta.bls.gov/maps/cew/CO?period=2010-Q1&industry=10&geo\\_id=08000&chartData=3&distribution=Quantiles&pos\\_color=blue&neg\\_color=orange&showHideChart=hide](http://beta.bls.gov/maps/cew/CO?period=2010-Q1&industry=10&geo_id=08000&chartData=3&distribution=Quantiles&pos_color=blue&neg_color=orange&showHideChart=hide)). Click on any county and you'll see a wealth of underlying, detailed, raw data.

As human service departments struggle to gather information that logically and accurately portrays the employment picture at the national and local levels, data resources such as these can be quite useful in helping decipher the future.

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