Growth Rates for Declining Occupations

Persistently Declining Industries for LMEC

The case for assigning a declining growth rate for labor demand to specific occupations.

The following logical steps were outlined to determine occupational codes (SOC Codes) that EDR would apply a negative growth rate to when estimating projected demand for the Labor Market Estimating Conference. These steps were not taken for the October 2026 LMEC, but, if this methodology is approved, can be updated and applied to future Conferences.

1. Identify occupations which have lost at least 50% of jobs compared to BLS data from 10 years prior (e.g. 2025 vs 2015) AND were observed as having had any reduction in estimated jobs from the prior year (e.g. 2024 to 2025). These occupations can be referred to as "persistently declining occupations", meaning that the overall trend has reduced the estimated number of jobs over the past 10 years, and we have not seen any recovery in the past year.
2. Identify the dominant industry for each of these persistently declining occupations via the BLS, sorting by the current year's percent of occupation: Industry-occupation matrix data, by occupation : U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Isolate our approach only for occupations whose dominant industry is projected to decline over the next 10 years according to the FEEC.
3. For persistently declining occupations whose dominant industry is projected to decline in the coming decade, find the projected percentage change in employment (at the national level) over the next decade according to the BLS: Employment Projections. Isolate our approach further by identifying only occupations that are projected to decline over the next 10 years. Use the projected decline in growth according to these projections from the BLS to estimate demand over the next 10 years for these occupations for use in the LMEC.

Only occupations that satisfy all of the above criteria will be assigned a negative growth rate, rather than the current default in our Methodology of assigning a 0% rate of growth.

If EDR were to apply the above approach to the October 2026 LMEC, it would have identified 2 occupations and applied the following growth rates to them:

SOC Code	SOC Title	Growth Rate (Annual)	2025 Demand Estimate	2035 Demand Estimate (Current Methodology)	2035 Demand Estimate (Proposed Methodology)
43-9031	Desktop Publishers	-1.45%	287	287	248
51-8091	Chemical Plant and System Operators	-0.52%	230	230	218