SOURCES OF METRO ECONOMY AND EXPORT DATA

No single definitive data source exists to support metropolitan export promotion efforts but a variety of entities provide important resources:

Brookings Institution

The Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings produces and maintains a strong array of metro-oriented data related to economy, demographics, exports, and many other topics. A good source of metro economic data for the largest 100 U.S. metro areas is the quarterly Metro Monitor, which provides data on employment, unemployment, gross metro product, and housing, and provides metro area rankings for each factor. Brookings also tracks the economic growth of 200 world cities through its annual Global Metro Monitor, which provides great context for the shifting growth markets around the globe. You can access all this data on the program's data resources page at: http://www.brookings.edu/about/projects/state-metro-innovation/resources

The primary source for metropolitan-area export data based on the location of where a service or goods export is produced (not from where it is shipped) is Brookings' latest analysis "Export Nation 2012." This report provides the core set of export data and rankings for each U.S. metro area, as well as for all states and counties. Profiles have been developed for each of the largest 100 U.S. metro areas and all states to provide a snapshot overview of export performance.

Brookings has also developed a U.S. export database, with export data for all 3,113 counties, all metro areas and micropolitan areas, and all 50 states including the District of Columbia.

For each geographical level, the database provides

➤ Nominal and real exports, total and by industry (major and detailed)
➤ Exports share of Gross Domestic Product
➤ Direct export-production jobs, total and by major industry
➤ Total export-supported jobs, total and by major industry
➤ Annualized real export growth rates, total and by industry (major and detailed)

The dataset reports on 34 major industrial categories: 26 for goods exports (3-digit level NAICS) and eight for services (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis service export categories). It provides export data for 212 detailed industries (subcomponents of the major export industries), both goods and services.

In addition, for each of the largest 100 metropolitan areas, 50 states, and the District of Columbia, the database provides exports by export destination (country): in aggregate, by major industry, and the top 10 markets for the top 10 detailed industries.

To access the full Export Nation 2012 report, metro area export profiles, the database, and related documents, go to: http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2012/03/08-exports

Federal Sources

Data on exports is also available from the U.S. Census Bureau, Foreign Trade Statistics division (Census) and from the International Trade Administration (ITA) at the national, state and metro level. However, there are a number of limitations to export data that metro-focused users may find frustrating. Metro area data from these sources are based on movement of goods through the market and not the point of production, typically lagging state and federal data by one- or two-years; data on top foreign export markets from each metro area are not readily available; some of the more in-depth public data are available for products and not industries; identifying export firms by metro area is difficult; and much of the data cover only goods, not services. As a result of the MEI effort, the Census plans to begin releasing more up-to-date metro area data with its quarterly export updates, starting in 2013.

The Census offers more tailored export data for a relatively low fee, such as, for example, more in-depth analysis of a metro area's top exporting industries. The Census also has good data on the destination countries for U.S. exports, by product; however, this data is not available for metro areas. It does provide a good understanding of where U.S. products are in demand throughout the world and this is highly beneficial to exporting companies.

Census data may be accessed here (requires a monthly subscription):
https://www.usatradeonline.gov/

For a comparison of Brookings and Census metro export data, please go here:
http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Research/Files/Reports/2012/3/08exports/0308_exports_appendixb.pdf

For ITA data, go to: http://www.ita.doc.gov/data.asp

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) provides quarterly and annual trade in goods and services statistics for the United States, but not for state or local areas. These data include high-level national statistics for exports (broken down by goods and services) and for services exports, broken down by major category of service. This can prove helpful for high level national export trend analysis that includes services. The BEA also produces periodic research papers covering areas, such as the nature of U.S. exports and what types of firms are exporting services.

See:
http://www.bea.gov/international/index.htm#trade

State Sources

Some states track and report export and trade data on an annual or quarterly basis and this may prove to be the best source of more localized, up-to-date statistics for certain topics. While this data is typically statewide, it can serve as a reasonable proxy for a metro area in some cases, particularly if it represents a significant portion of state exports. For example, the Minnesota Trade Office produces statewide quarterly export data for exports and growth by industry and by country of destination. This data is available because Minnesota has a robust state trade office and they have dedicated resources to tracking it. In many states, this resource unfortunately does not exist and in larger states with many metro areas—such as California, Texas and Michigan—statewide figures may not suffice.

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce "Trade Supports Jobs" website provides a database of top exporting firms by state and congressional district. While this data also has many limitations (including overrepresentation of freight forwarders), it is a good place to start in identifying exporting firms.

http://www.tradesupportsjobs.com/