For researchers asking whether there are data in the RDC that can serve the same purpose as the National Establishment Time Series (NETS) Database, the short answer is "Yes!"

The NETS dataset is best understood as a rough approximation of information drawn from the Census Bureau's County Business Patterns (CBP), Nonemployer Statistics (NES), and the BLS Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). With the exception of QCEW, CBP and NES are both available to RDC researchers through the links below:

SSEL/CBP: https://www.researchdatagov.org/product/642

NES: https://www.researchdatagov.org/product/16576

Depending on your research question and the kind of analysis you hope to conduct, there may be Census or IRS datasets that provide a suitable substitute for the QCEW, and allow you to construct an analytical sample that is even more complete than what NETS offers.

Through use of the LBD and the ILBD, researchers essentially have the universe of establishments in the U.S. What the ILBD does that the LBD doesn't is include data from sole proprietors, partnerships, and single-location corporations with employees. Combining the two should allow you to capture the full universe of firms in the United States, except for agricultural firms.

The smallest geographical unit present in the LBD, without linking it to anything else, is the county level.

The SSEL/CBPBR has the full physical street address.

Some researchers are also interested in making use of the Small Business Administration Loan Program 504 (SBA 504). There are public and private versions of the SBA 504 dataset. The restricted files have PIKs, EINs, and MAFIDs, allowing you to link them to the individual who applied for the loan, the business entity that received the loan, and the actual physical building associated with the entity.

The restricted-use SBA 504 requires approval from the SBA. They, like the IRS, get three months to review your proposal after Census approves it. No agency usually takes the full three months, but it is possible.

With the inclusion of the SSEL/CBPBR and ILBD, researchers should have the information needed to group firms by census tract and by year.

All of the restricted-use datasets we talked about use unified identification systems—EINs, PIKs, or Census-specific IDs, so can be linked together.