

# News

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## COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN MASSACHUSETTS

### Second Quarter 2007

In the second quarter of 2007, average weekly wages in Middlesex County increased 6.0 percent over the year, the largest advance among Massachusetts' nine large counties with 75,000 or more jobs as measured by 2006 annual average employment, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. Suffolk County's 4.7-percent wage growth was second fastest in the State, followed by Essex County's 4.5-percent increase. Suffolk County had the highest average weekly wage level in Massachusetts at \$1,284, followed by Middlesex County (\$1,179) and Norfolk County (\$986). (See table 1.) Regional Commissioner Denis McSweeney noted that nationally, average weekly wages grew at a 4.6-percent pace, averaging \$820 in the second quarter of 2007.

#### County Wage Levels

Three of Massachusetts' nine large counties—Suffolk, Middlesex, and Norfolk—had average weekly wage levels exceeding \$900 in the second quarter of 2007. Essex County had the fourth-highest wage level (\$879), followed by Worcester County (\$843). All five of these large counties recorded wage levels greater than the nationwide average of \$820 and ranked in the top third nationally among the 328 large counties in the United States. More specifically, the average weekly wage in Suffolk County was \$464 or 57 percent above the national level, ranking 9<sup>th</sup> highest nationwide. In Middlesex County, the average weekly wage was \$359 or 44 percent above that for the nation and placed 13<sup>th</sup>.

At the other end of the wage spectrum, Barnstable County (\$708), reported the lowest average weekly wage in the State and was the only county to place in the bottom third of the national ranking at 234<sup>th</sup>.

Average weekly wages were higher than the national average in 110 of the largest 328 U.S. counties in the second quarter of 2007. New York County, N.Y., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$1,540. Santa Clara, Calif., was second with an average weekly wage of \$1,504, followed by Clayton, Ga. (\$1,358), Washington, D.C. (\$1,357), and Arlington, Va. (\$1,352). Three of the 10 counties with the highest wages in the United States were located in the greater New York metropolitan area (New York, N.Y., Somerset, N.J., and Fairfield, Conn.); 3 others were located in or around the San Francisco area (Santa Clara, Calif., San Francisco, Calif., and San Mateo, Calif.), while 2 others were located in or around the Washington D.C. metropolitan area (Arlington, Va., and Washington, D.C.). Rounding out the top 10 were

Clayton, Ga., part of the Atlanta metropolitan area, and Suffolk County, Mass., part of the Boston metropolitan area.

There were 218 counties with an average weekly wage below the national average in the second quarter of 2007. The lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron County, Texas (\$515), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$518), Horry, S.C., and Webb, Texas (\$545 each), and Yakima, Wash. (\$555). The average weekly wage in the lowest-paid county, Cameron, was approximately one-third the wage in the highest-paid county, New York.

### **County Wage Changes**

Middlesex County's 6.0-percent wage gain was the largest increase in the State from the second quarter of 2006 to the second quarter of 2007 and ranked 46<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation. Two counties recorded wage growth close to the national increase of 4.6 percent—Suffolk (4.7 percent, 107<sup>th</sup>) and Essex (4.5 percent, 122<sup>nd</sup>). Norfolk County (1.2 percent, 302<sup>nd</sup>) reported the lowest wage growth in the State and ranked in the bottom quartile nationally. The remaining five counties registered wage growth rates ranging from 3.6 to 3.8 percent and were in the middle of the national ranking.

Among the largest counties, Clayton County, Ga., led the nation in growth in average weekly wages, with an increase of 87.3 percent from the second quarter of 2006 to the second quarter of 2007. Clayton County's over-the-year gain in average weekly wages in 2007 was due to increases in wage disbursements in the trade, transportation, and utilities supersector during the quarter. Queens, N.Y., was second with growth of 12.7 percent, followed by the counties of Rockingham, N.H. (10.1 percent), Ventura, Calif. (9.2 percent), and Lake, Ill. (9.1 percent).

Nationally, six large counties experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. Saginaw, Mich., had the largest decline (-5.2 percent), followed by Orleans County, La. (-2.9 percent).

### **State Average Weekly Wages**

The average weekly wage in Massachusetts was \$1,008, \$188 above the nationwide figure and the 4<sup>th</sup> highest wage among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. (See table 2.) Nationally, 9 of the 16 areas in which the average weekly wage levels surpassed the U.S. average fell in a contiguous band along the East Coast stretching from Virginia to New Hampshire. The five highest wage levels in the nation were in the District of Columbia (\$1,357), Connecticut (\$1,033), New York (\$1,020), Massachusetts, and New Jersey (\$989). Average weekly wages in this group were 32 percent above that for the nation. During this same period, three states had wage levels averaging less than 75 percent of national earnings: South Dakota (\$590), Mississippi (\$609), and Montana (\$611).

Wyoming experienced wage growth of 8.0 percent from the second quarter of 2006 to the second quarter of 2007, higher than any other state. Five other states experienced wage growth from 6.6 to 6.3 percent during this period—Utah, Georgia, Connecticut, Montana and New Hampshire. At the other end of the scale, Delaware posted the smallest increase in wages, up 2.2 percent. No state experienced an over-the-year decrease.

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from reports submitted by employers subject to state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) laws. The 8.9 million employer reports cover 137.0 million full- and part-time workers. The average

weekly wage values are calculated by dividing quarterly total wages by the average of the three monthly employment levels. This number then is divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or states for reasons other than changes in the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/>; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised (see Technical Note below) and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

### **Additional statistics and other information**

An annual bulletin, *Employment and Wages*, features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2006 edition of this bulletin will contain selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2007 version of the national news release. As with the 2005 edition, this edition will include the data on a CD for enhanced access and usability with the printed booklet containing selected graphic representations of QCEW data; the data tables themselves will be published exclusively in electronic formats as PDFs. *Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2006* will be available for sale in early 2008 from the United States Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250, telephone (866) 512-1800, outside Washington, D.C. Within Washington, D.C., the telephone number is (202) 512-1800. The fax number is (202) 512-2104.

QCEW-based news releases issued by other regional offices have been placed at one convenient BLS Web site location, <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewregional.htm>.

For personal assistance or further information on the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the Boston Information Office at (617) 565-2327 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET.

### TECHNICAL NOTE

QCEW data are the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. For this reason, county and industry data are not designed to be used as a time series.

The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. The potential differences result from several causes. Differences between BLS and state published data may be due to the continuing receipt, review and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

**Table 1. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and the 9 largest counties in Massachusetts, second quarter 2007(2)**

Area	Employment		Average Weekly Wage (3)			
	June 2007 (thousands)	Percent change, second quarter	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level (4)	Percent change, second quarter	National ranking by percent change
United States (6)	137,018.2	1.2	\$820	--	4.6	--
Massachusetts	3,300.7	1.2	1,008	4	4.8	15
Barnstable	102.4	1.4	708	234	3.7	183
Bristol	224.3	-0.1	758	164	3.8	170
Essex	304.7	0.6	879	72	4.5	122
Hampden	202.8	-0.1	748	178	3.7	183
Middlesex	826.7	1.5	1,179	13	6.0	46
Norfolk	330.5	1.0	986	38	1.2	302
Plymouth	182.2	-0.7	803	130	3.6	194
Suffolk	589.1	2.5	1,284	9	4.7	107
Worcester	327.9	0.8	843	96	3.7	183

(1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

(2) Data are preliminary.

(3) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(4) Ranking does not include the county of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

(5) Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

(6) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

**Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages by state, second quarter 2007(2)**

State	Employment		Average weekly wage (3)			
	June 2007 (thousands)	Percent change, second quarter	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, second quarter	National ranking by percent change
United States (4)	137,018.2	1.2	\$820	-	4.6	-
Alabama	1,965.4	1.1	697	38	3.6	38
Alaska	325.8	-0.5	832	13	5.6	9
Arizona	2,612.4	1.2	786	20	4.4	23
Arkansas	1,186.5	0.3	639	46	4.2	28
California	15,832.5	0.8	935	6	5.4	11
Colorado	2,326.9	2.2	832	13	4.8	15
Connecticut	1,714.2	0.9	1,033	2	6.4	4
Delaware	430.2	0.0	870	9	2.2	51
District of Columbia	683.2	0.8	1,357	1	4.3	26
Florida	7,894.2	0.2	743	23	3.2	45
Georgia	4,091.5	1.4	792	19	6.5	3
Hawaii	631.2	1.4	736	27	4.2	28
Idaho	679.1	3.0	626	47	2.3	50
Illinois	5,956.3	0.8	874	8	4.4	23
Indiana	2,933.4	0.5	702	33	2.6	48
Iowa	1,518.6	0.9	664	42	3.9	35
Kansas	1,370.7	2.0	702	33	4.8	15
Kentucky	1,828.2	1.7	700	35	4.2	28
Louisiana	1,880.2	3.2	711	31	4.1	31
Maine	619.6	0.6	658	44	4.1	31
Maryland	2,584.9	0.7	899	7	5.3	12
Massachusetts	3,300.7	1.2	1,008	4	4.8	15
Michigan	4,252.9	-1.4	807	17	2.9	46
Minnesota	2,730.9	0.0	834	12	5.6	9
Mississippi	1,137.4	0.9	609	50	3.6	38
Missouri	2,764.6	0.8	727	29	3.4	43
Montana	449.8	1.7	611	49	6.3	5
Nebraska	930.9	1.6	654	45	3.5	42
Nevada	1,297.9	1.0	776	21	3.7	36
New Hampshire	643.7	0.7	823	16	6.3	5
New Jersey	4,066.7	0.4	989	5	4.3	26
New Mexico	833.3	1.1	686	39	5.2	13
New York	8,688.8	1.3	1,020	3	5.9	7
North Carolina	4,090.5	3.0	718	30	4.1	31
North Dakota	347.7	1.5	619	48	4.7	19
Ohio	5,384.6	-0.1	740	25	3.4	43
Oklahoma	1,538.5	1.6	665	40	4.1	31
Oregon	1,761.6	1.7	742	24	4.5	22
Pennsylvania	5,740.3	1.1	802	18	4.6	20
Rhode Island	492.9	0.3	774	22	2.5	49
South Carolina	1,917.4	3.0	665	40	2.9	46
South Dakota	404.3	2.1	590	51	4.8	15
Tennessee	2,768.7	0.7	729	28	3.6	38
Texas	10,296.1	3.4	827	15	5.9	7
Utah	1,233.7	4.4	698	36	6.6	2
Vermont	306.6	-0.5	698	36	5.0	14
Virginia	3,731.5	1.0	859	10	4.4	23
Washington	2,989.8	2.7	835	11	4.6	20
West Virginia	717.1	0.3	659	43	3.6	38
Wisconsin	2,845.8	0.4	709	32	3.7	36
Wyoming	288.3	3.3	739	26	8.0	1
Puerto Rico	1,020.7	-1.6	460	(5)	6.0	(5)
Virgin Islands	46.9	3.4	707	(5)	4.1	(5)

(1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

(2) Data are preliminary.

(3) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(5) Data not included in the national ranking.