

News

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AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES IN PENNSYLVANIA: FIRST QUARTER 2007

Allegheny County recorded 13th fastest wage growth in the United States Montgomery County ranked 22nd highest in wages in the nation

In the first quarter of 2007, the average weekly wage in Allegheny County increased by 8.1 percent over the year, the largest advance among Pennsylvania's 19 counties with employment of 75,000 or more. Luzerne County's 6.1-percent wage growth was the second fastest in the Commonwealth, closely followed by Lehigh County's 6.0 percent. Montgomery County had the highest average weekly wage level in Pennsylvania, \$1,176, followed by Chester County (\$1,117) and Philadelphia County (\$1,038). Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted that among Pennsylvania's 19 large counties, 9 recorded wage growth above the national rate of 5.1 percent, though only 5 had wages above the nationwide average of \$885. (See table 1.)

Pennsylvania's counties had some of the highest average weekly wages in the country. Montgomery County ranked 22nd; Chester County, 32nd; and Philadelphia County, 45th when wages were compared for all 328 large counties nationwide. Counties in Pennsylvania also registered some of the largest over-the-year wage gains in the nation in the first quarter of 2007. Allegheny County's wage growth was 13th highest in the United States, and the counties of Luzerne and Lehigh ranked 42nd and 45th, respectively. Four counties in Pennsylvania—Allegheny, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia—were among the top one-fourth of large counties nationwide in both wage levels and wage growth.

Wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 48 counties in Pennsylvania with employment below 75,000. All of these 48 counties had average weekly wages below the national level. (See table 2.)

County Wage Levels

Among Pennsylvania's 19 large counties, 3 had average weekly wages exceeding \$1,000 in the first quarter of 2007—Montgomery, Chester, and Philadelphia. Allegheny County was next averaging \$946, followed by Delaware County at \$926. All five of these large counties, four of which were located in the Philadelphia, Pa. metropolitan area, recorded wage levels greater than the nationwide average of \$885 and ranked in the top one-fourth nationally. The average weekly wage in the top-paying county of Montgomery was 33 percent above the national level.

At the other end of the wage spectrum, Lackawanna County (\$634) reported the lowest average weekly wage level in the Commonwealth, followed by the counties of Westmoreland (\$659), Erie (\$669), Luzerne (\$679), and Lancaster (\$708). These five counties, two of which were located in the Scranton—Wilkes-Barre, Pa. metropolitan area, ranked in the bottom one-fourth nationwide.

New York County, N.Y., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$2,821. Fairfield, Conn., was second with an average weekly wage of \$1,979, followed by Suffolk, Mass. (\$1,659), San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,639), and Somerset, N.J. (\$1,615). Of the 10 counties with the highest wages in the United States, 4 were located in the greater New York metropolitan area (New York, N.Y., Fairfield, Conn., Somerset, N.J., and Hudson, N.J.), 3 others were located in or around the San Francisco area (San Francisco, Santa

Clara, and San Mateo, all in California), and 2 more were located in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area (Arlington, Va., and Washington, D.C.). Rounding out the top 10 was Suffolk County, Mass., part of the Boston metropolitan area. Cameron County, Texas (\$502) reported the lowest average weekly wage, followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$516), Horry, S.C. (\$536), Webb, Texas (\$542), and Yakima, Wash. (\$569).

County Wage Changes

Of Pennsylvania's 19 large counties, 9 recorded wage growth above the national increase of 5.1 percent from the first quarter of 2006 to the first quarter of 2007. As mentioned, Allegheny County's 8.1-percent wage gain was the largest increase in the Commonwealth and 13th highest in the nation, followed by Luzerne County's 6.1-percent gain (42nd), and Lehigh County's 6.0-percent advance (45th). The other six counties with higher-than-average wage growth were Philadelphia (5.8 percent), Butler and Delaware (both 5.6 percent), Erie (5.5 percent), Montgomery (5.4 percent), and Dauphin (5.2 percent). All nine counties registered wage growth rates among the highest one-fourth of large counties in the U.S.

Cumberland and Lancaster Counties, each at 2.2 percent, reported the lowest percentage increase in average weekly wages in the Commonwealth in the first quarter of 2007. Westmoreland County was next at 2.5 percent, followed by Lackawanna County with 3.1 percent. With the exception of Lackawanna, these counties ranked in the bottom one-fourth in wage growth nationwide.

Among the largest counties, Trumbull, Ohio, led the nation in growth in average weekly wages with an increase of 22.3 percent from the first quarter of 2006. New York, N.Y., was second with growth of 16.7 percent, followed by the counties of Cobb, Ga. (11.2 percent), Suffolk, Mass. (10.8 percent), and Clay, Mo. (9.7 percent). New York County experienced substantial over-the-year wage growth, which had a significant impact on national average weekly wage growth in the first quarter of 2007. Without New York County's over-the-year employment and wage growth, national average weekly wage growth would have been 4.2 percent; a 0.9-percentage point reduction.

Fourteen counties experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. Bibb, Ga., and Loudoun, Va., led the nation in declines (-3.0 percent each), followed by the counties of Orleans, La., and Norfolk, Mass. (-2.7 percent each), and Arapahoe, Colo., Sarasota, Fla., and Peoria, Ill. (-1.8 percent each).

Wage Levels in Pennsylvania's Smaller Counties

As mentioned, all 48 counties in Pennsylvania with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages below the national level. Sullivan County reported the lowest wage level, at \$452. The highest wage among Pennsylvania's 48 small counties was Montour County's \$847, followed by Greene County's \$803.

Six of the Commonwealth's 19 large counties recorded higher wage levels than Montour County, but none recorded lower wages than Sullivan County. When all 67 counties in Pennsylvania are considered, three—Sullivan, Susquehanna, and Perry—had wages below \$500. Of these, two were located in the northeastern part of the Commonwealth, and the third was located in the Harrisburg metropolitan area, in central Pennsylvania. Three other counties—Montgomery, Chester, and Philadelphia—had wages above \$1,000. All three of these counties were located in the Philadelphia metropolitan area, in the southeastern part of the Commonwealth. Forty-four, or nearly two-thirds, of the counties in Pennsylvania reported average weekly wages from \$501 to \$700 in the first quarter of 2007. (See chart 1.)

State Average Weekly Wages

The average weekly wage in Pennsylvania was \$849, \$36 below the nationwide level, ranking 16th highest among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. (See table 3.) Nationally, 8 of the 11 areas in which average weekly wage levels surpassed the U.S. average fell in a contiguous band along the east coast, stretching from Massachusetts to Virginia. The five highest average wages were in the District of Columbia (\$1,428), New York (\$1,397), Connecticut (\$1,263), Massachusetts (\$1,110), and New Jersey (\$1,097). Average weekly wages in this group were 24 percent or more above that for the nation. At the other end of the scale, seven states had wage

levels 75 percent or less of national earnings: Montana (\$600), South Dakota (\$602), North Dakota (\$615), Mississippi (\$616), Idaho (\$636), Arkansas (\$642), and West Virginia (\$652).

New York experienced wage growth of 11.8 percent from the first quarter of 2006 to the first quarter of 2007, higher than any other state. Wyoming was second with 9.3-percent growth, followed by Rhode Island, at 7.1 percent. No state experienced over-the-year declines. Oklahoma posted the smallest wage gain, up 1.3 percent. Pennsylvania's average wage growth equaled the nation's 5.1-percent advance.

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 134.3 million full- and part-time workers. The average weekly wage is computed by dividing the total quarterly payroll of employees covered by UI programs by the average monthly number of these employees. 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 www.bls.gov/cew/; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised (see Note below) and will 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. 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 or by calling 1-866-512-1800. The 2005 bulletin is now available in a portable document format (PDF) on the BLS Web site at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn05.htm. Also, the quarterly press release, County Employment and Wages, presents employment and wage data for the largest counties in the U.S. and is available at www.bls.gov/cew/.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

For personal assistance or further information on the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the Mid-Atlantic Information Office at 215-597-3282 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. ET.

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

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. Covered¹ employment and wages in the United States and the 19 largest counties in Pennsylvania, first quarter 2007²

Area	Employment	Average weekly wage (3)			
	March 2007 (thousands)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level (4)	Percent change, first quarter 2006-07 (5)	National ranking by percent change (4)
United States (6)	134,320.6	\$885	--	5.1	--
Pennsylvania	5,589.6	849	16	5.1	13
Allegheny, Pa.	676.7	946	63	8.1	13
Berks, Pa.	167.7	752	200	3.6	185
Bucks, Pa.	262.8	830	136	4.5	121
Butler, Pa.	78.1	714	245	5.6	57
Chester, Pa.	236.4	1,117	32	2.9	234
Cumberland, Pa.	124.6	776	169	2.2	261
Dauphin, Pa.	179.6	834	130	5.2	73
Delaware, Pa.	208.4	926	71	5.6	57
Erie, Pa.	126.5	669	285	5.5	62
Lackawanna, Pa.	101.0	634	306	3.1	221
Lancaster, Pa.	225.3	708	253	2.2	261
Lehigh, Pa.	175.9	868	103	6.0	45
Luzerne, Pa.	140.0	679	273	6.1	42
Montgomery, Pa.	483.5	1,176	22	5.4	65
Northampton, Pa.	98.1	745	207	4.2	139
Philadelphia, Pa.	631.8	1,038	45	5.8	51
Washington, Pa.	77.4	732	226	4.9	88
Westmoreland, Pa.	135.0	659	295	2.5	252
York, Pa.	175.1	737	217	3.9	169

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. Covered¹ employment and wages in the United States and all of the counties in Pennsylvania, first quarter 2007²

Area	Employment March 2007 (thousands)	Average weekly wage (3)
United States (4)	134,320.6	\$885
Pennsylvania	5,589.6	849
Adams	34.7	617
Allegheny	676.7	946
Armstrong	18.2	650
Beaver	56.5	686
Bedford	15.1	534
Berks	167.7	752
Blair	59.0	596
Bradford	21.6	648
Bucks	262.8	830
Butler	78.1	714
Cambria	58.1	584
Cameron	2.6	602
Carbon	16.7	542
Centre	64.0	695
Chester	236.4	1,117
Clarion	14.6	552
Clearfield	31.4	568
Clinton	13.2	572
Columbia	25.0	606
Crawford	30.8	599
Cumberland	124.6	776
Dauphin	179.6	834
Delaware	208.4	926
Elk	15.5	633
Erie	126.5	669
Fayette	40.6	545
Forest	2.2	634
Franklin	56.9	646
Fulton	5.2	736
Greene	12.5	803
Huntingdon	13.1	572
Indiana	32.6	701
Jefferson	16.2	561
Juniata	6.6	510
Lackawanna	101.0	634
Lancaster	225.3	708
Lawrence	30.8	628
Lebanon	47.4	616
Lehigh	175.9	868

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.

Table 2. Covered¹ employment and wages in the United States and all of the counties in Pennsylvania, first quarter 2007² (continued)

Area	Employment March 2007 (thousands)	Average weekly wage (3)
Luzerne	140.0	679
Lycoming	51.4	626
Mc Kean	17.3	633
Mercer	48.3	627
Mifflin	15.6	574
Monroe	57.0	685
Montgomery	483.5	1,176
Montour	13.9	847
Northampton	98.1	745
Northumberland	29.6	619
Perry	8.0	485
Philadelphia	631.8	1,038
Pike	10.7	556
Potter	5.6	757
Schuylkill	51.9	602
Snyder	16.6	555
Somerset	26.1	553
Sullivan	1.6	452
Susquehanna	8.9	480
Tioga	12.4	573
Union	16.4	651
Venango	20.5	608
Warren	15.3	620
Washington	77.4	732
Wayne	15.1	564
Westmoreland	135.0	659
Wyoming	9.6	686
York	175.1	737

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.

Table 3. Covered¹ employment and wages by state, first quarter 2007²

State	Employment	Average weekly wage (3)			
	March 2007 (thousands)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, first quarter 2006-07	National ranking by percent change
United States (4)	134,320.6	\$885	-	5.1	-
Alabama	1,953.7	716	35	3.5	39
Alaska	299.8	831	20	5.2	11
Arizona	2,667.2	803	21	4.7	18
Arkansas	1,179.9	642	46	3.2	42
California	15,569.4	988	6	3.9	34
Colorado	2,262.4	889	11	3.6	37
Connecticut	1,665.0	1,263	3	6.1	4
Delaware	416.6	986	7	2.1	50
District of Columbia	674.4	1,428	1	4.7	18
Florida	8,093.4	764	25	3.4	40
Georgia	4,065.1	837	17	4.9	14
Hawaii	626.4	748	27	4.2	30
Idaho	645.0	636	47	4.6	23
Illinois	5,795.7	956	8	4.6	23
Indiana	2,880.8	739	30	2.9	44
Iowa	1,457.6	686	39	3.6	37
Kansas	1,349.1	720	34	4.7	18
Kentucky	1,791.5	699	37	4.0	32
Louisiana	1,863.5	730	32	4.4	27
Maine	582.1	677	41	3.7	36
Maryland	2,527.0	939	9	4.6	23
Massachusetts	3,167.5	1,110	4	6.1	4
Michigan	4,130.2	851	15	4.0	32
Minnesota	2,629.6	873	12	5.2	11
Mississippi	1,127.3	616	48	3.2	42
Missouri	2,710.1	744	29	2.9	44
Montana	428.8	600	51	4.9	14
Nebraska	899.3	667	44	2.8	46
Nevada	1,282.3	802	22	4.8	16
New Hampshire	619.8	836	18	4.6	23
New Jersey	3,926.6	1,097	5	5.6	7
New Mexico	819.3	685	40	5.9	6
New York	8,441.3	1,397	2	11.8	1
North Carolina	4,034.3	779	24	4.7	18
North Dakota	334.5	615	49	4.8	16
Ohio	5,241.0	793	23	5.3	9
Oklahoma	1,534.3	676	43	1.3	51
Oregon	1,707.8	755	26	2.7	47
Pennsylvania	5,589.6	849	16	5.1	13
Rhode Island	472.2	834	19	7.1	3
South Carolina	1,885.9	677	41	2.3	48
South Dakota	381.9	602	50	3.4	40
Tennessee	2,732.5	738	31	4.7	18
Texas	10,143.0	872	13	5.6	7
Utah	1,203.9	696	38	5.3	9
Vermont	300.0	704	36	2.3	48
Virginia	3,644.6	901	10	4.4	27
Washington	2,869.9	868	14	4.3	29
West Virginia	700.3	652	45	4.2	30
Wisconsin	2,727.7	745	28	3.9	34
Wyoming	269.1	730	32	9.3	2
Puerto Rico	1,024.5	476	(5)	5.3	(5)
Virgin Islands	45.6	687	(5)	6.3	(5)

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

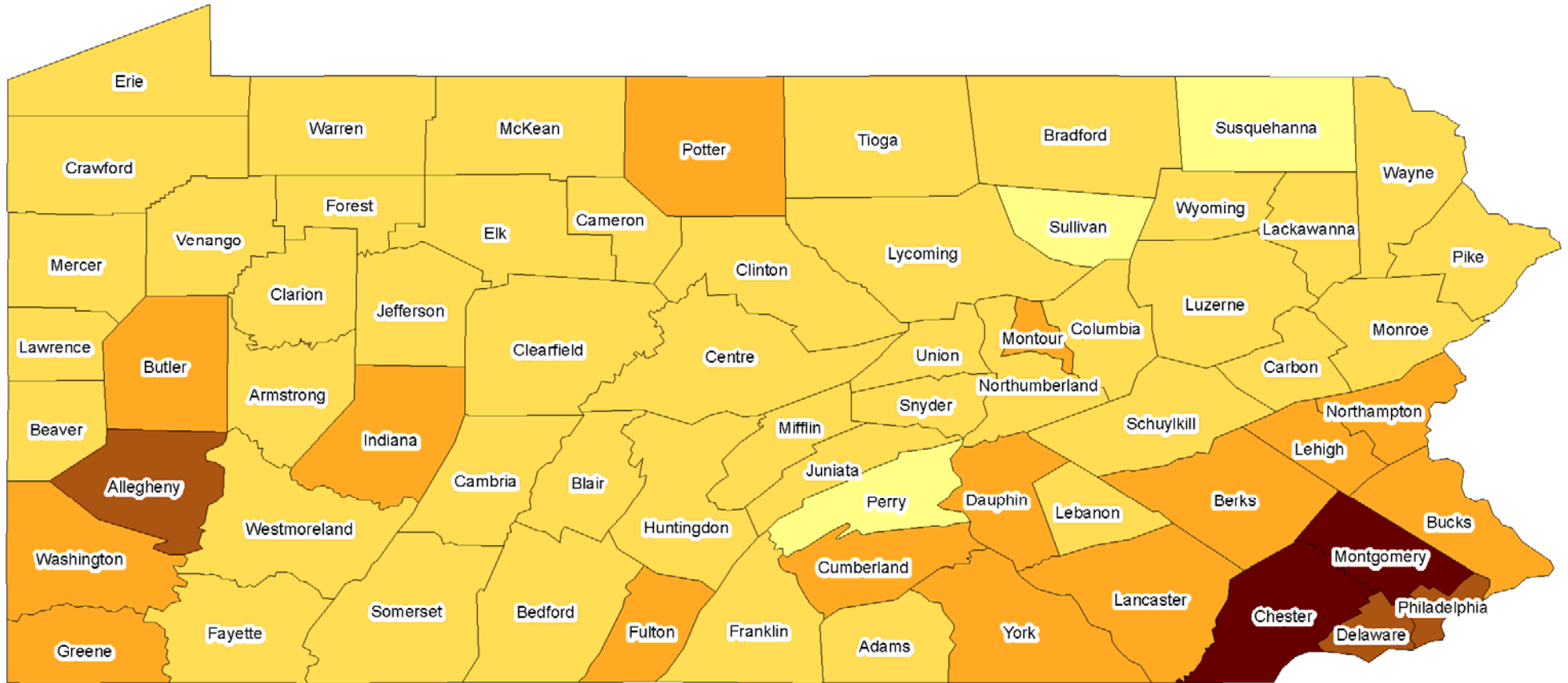
² Data are preliminary.

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.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in Pennsylvania, first quarter 2007



**Average weekly wages
(National average = \$885)**

