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USDL 02-224

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For release: 10:00 A.M. EDT
Wednesday, April 17, 2002

USUAL WEEKLY EARNINGS OF WAGE AND SALARY WORKERS: FIRST QUARTER 2002

Median weekly earnings of the nation's 97.2 million full-time wage and salary workers were \$614 in the first quarter of 2002, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. This was 3.7 percent higher than a year earlier, compared with a gain of 1.3 percent in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) over the same period.

Data on usual earnings are collected as part of the Current Population Survey, a nationwide sample survey of households in which respondents are asked, among other things, how much each wage and salary worker usually earns. (See the explanatory note.) Highlights from the first-quarter data are:

—Women who usually worked full time had median earnings of \$535 per week, or 77.8 percent of the \$688 median for men. The female-to-male earnings ratios were higher among blacks (91.8 percent) and Hispanics (85.1 percent) than among whites (77.5 percent). (See table 1.)

—Median earnings for black men working at full-time jobs were \$538 per week, 76.0 percent of the median for white men (\$708). The difference was much less among women, as black women's median earnings (\$494) were 90.0 percent of those for their white counterparts (\$549). Overall, median earnings of Hispanics who worked full time (\$421) were lower than those of blacks (\$511) and whites (\$629). (See table 1.)

—Among men, the \$810 median weekly earnings of 45- to 54-year-olds was the highest of any age group. Men age 55 to 64 had the second-highest earnings (\$795). Among women, earnings also were highest for those 45 to 54 years old (\$605) and second highest for 55- to 64-year-olds (\$581). (See table 2.)

—Among the major occupational groups, persons employed full time in managerial and professional specialty occupations had the highest median weekly earnings—\$1,053 for men and \$760 for women. Men and women in service and farm jobs earned the least. (See table 3.)

—Full-time workers age 25 and over without a high school diploma had median weekly earnings of \$386, compared with \$536 for high school graduates (no college) and \$940 for college graduates. Among college graduates with advanced degrees (professional or master's degree and above), the highest-earning 10 percent of male workers made \$2,716 or more per week, compared with \$1,751 or more for their female counterparts. (See table 4.)

Explanatory Note

The estimates in this release were obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS), which provides the basic information on the labor force, employment, and unemployment. The survey is conducted monthly for the Bureau of Labor Statistics by the U.S. Census Bureau from a scientifically selected national sample of about 60,000 households, with coverage in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The earnings data are collected from one-quarter of the CPS monthly sample and are limited to wages and salaries. The data, therefore, exclude self-employment income.

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.

Reliability

Statistics based on the CPS are subject to both sampling and nonsampling error. When a sample, rather than the entire population, is surveyed, there is a chance that the sample estimates may differ from the "true" population values they represent. The exact difference, or *sampling error*, varies depending on the particular sample selected, and this variability is measured by the standard error of the estimate. There is about a 90-percent chance, or level of confidence, that an estimate based on a sample will differ by no more than 1.6 standard errors from the "true" population value because of sampling error. BLS analyses are generally conducted at the 90-percent level of confidence.

The CPS data also are affected by *nonsampling error*. Nonsampling error can occur for many reasons, including the failure to sample a segment of the population, inability to obtain information for all respondents in the sample, inability or unwillingness of respondents to provide correct information, and errors made in the collection or processing of the data.

For a full discussion of the reliability of data from the CPS and information on estimating standard errors, see the "Explanatory Notes and Estimates of Error" section of the February 1994 and subsequent issues of *Employment and Earnings*.

Definitions

The principal definitions used in connection with the earnings series are described briefly below.

Usual weekly earnings. Data represent earnings before taxes and other deductions and include any overtime pay, commissions, or tips usually received (at the main job in the case of multiple jobholders.) Prior to 1994, respondents were asked how much they usually earned per week. Since January 1994, respondents have been asked to identify the easiest way for them to report earnings (hourly, weekly, biweekly, twice monthly, monthly, annually, other) and how much they usually earn in the reported time period. Earnings reported on a basis other than weekly are converted to a weekly equivalent. The term "usual" is as perceived by the respondent. If the respondent asks for

a definition of usual, interviewers are instructed to define the term as more than half the weeks worked during the past 4 or 5 months.

Medians (and other quantiles) of weekly earnings. The median (or upper limit of the second quartile) is the amount which divides a given earnings distribution into two equal groups, one having earnings above the median and the other having earnings below the median. Ten percent of a given distribution have earnings below the upper limit of the first decile (90 percent have higher earnings); 25 percent have earnings below the upper limit of the first quartile (75 percent have higher earnings); 75 percent have earnings below the upper limit of the third quartile (25 percent have higher earnings); and 90 percent have earnings below the upper limit of the ninth decile (10 percent have higher earnings).

The estimating procedure places each reported or calculated weekly earnings value into \$50-wide intervals which are centered around multiples of \$50. The actual value is estimated through the linear interpolation of the interval in which the quantile boundary lies.

Over-the-year changes in the medians (and other quantile boundaries) for specific groups may not necessarily be consistent with the movements estimated for the overall quantile boundary. The most common reasons for this possible anomaly are: (1) There could be a change in the relative weights of the subgroups. For example, the medians of both 16-to-24 year olds and those 25 years and over may rise; but if the lower-earning 16-to-24 group accounts for a greatly increased share of the total, the overall median could actually fall. (2) There could be a large change in the shape of the distribution of reported earnings, particularly near a quantile boundary. This could be caused by survey observations that are clustered at rounded values, e.g., \$250, \$300, \$400. An estimate lying in a \$50-wide centered interval containing such a cluster or "spike" tends to change more slowly than one in other intervals.

Wage and salary workers. Workers who receive wages, salaries, commissions, tips, payment in kind, or piece rates. The group includes employees in both the private and public sectors but, for the purposes of the earnings series, excludes all self-employed persons, regardless of whether or not their businesses are incorporated.

Full-time workers. Workers who usually work 35 hours or more per week at their sole or principal job.

Part-time workers. Workers who usually work fewer than 35 hours per week at their sole or principal job.

Constant dollars. The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) is used to convert current dollars to constant (1982) dollars.

Hispanic origin. Refers to persons who are of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Hispanic origin or descent. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race; hence, they are included in the numbers for the white and black populations.

Table 1. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted

Characteristic	Number of workers (in thousands)		Median weekly earnings			
	I 2001	I 2002	In current dollars		In constant (1982) dollars	
			I 2001	I 2002	I 2001	I 2002
SEX AND AGE						
Total, 16 years and over	99,054	97,165	\$592	\$614	\$325	\$333
Men, 16 years and over	55,382	54,188	668	688	367	373
16 to 24 years	6,195	5,640	384	410	211	222
25 years and over	49,187	48,548	718	734	394	398
Women, 16 years and over	43,673	42,977	508	535	279	290
16 to 24 years	4,831	4,521	358	375	197	204
25 years and over	38,842	38,456	535	574	294	311
RACE, HISPANIC ORIGIN, AND SEX						
White	81,758	80,357	610	629	335	341
Men	46,862	45,739	695	708	381	384
Women	34,896	34,618	520	549	286	298
Black	12,527	12,101	477	511	262	277
Men	5,899	5,820	505	538	277	291
Women	6,628	6,281	440	494	241	268
Hispanic origin	11,627	11,582	407	421	223	228
Men	7,083	7,067	424	456	233	247
Women	4,543	4,515	377	388	207	210

NOTE: Detail for the above race and Hispanic-origin groups will not sum to totals because data for the "other races" group are not presented

and Hispanics are included in both the white and black population groups.

Table 2. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by age, race, Hispanic origin, and sex, first quarter 2002 averages, not seasonally adjusted

Age, race, and Hispanic origin	Total		Men		Women	
	Number of workers (in thousands)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (in thousands)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (in thousands)	Median weekly earnings
TOTAL						
16 years and over	97,165	\$614	54,188	\$688	42,977	\$535
16 to 24 years	10,160	393	5,640	410	4,521	375
16 to 19 years	1,605	316	916	331	689	301
20 to 24 years	8,555	408	4,724	425	3,832	390
25 years and over	87,004	649	48,548	734	38,456	574
25 to 54 years	75,161	649	42,042	730	33,119	575
25 to 34 years	23,583	598	13,444	635	10,139	543
35 to 44 years	28,021	667	15,882	759	12,139	565
45 to 54 years	23,557	707	12,715	810	10,842	605
55 years and over	11,843	650	6,506	770	5,337	567
55 to 64 years	10,337	671	5,607	795	4,730	581
65 years and over	1,506	494	899	524	607	435
White						
16 years and over	80,357	629	45,739	708	34,618	549
16 to 24 years	8,602	398	4,870	416	3,732	378
25 years and over	71,756	669	40,870	755	30,886	584
25 to 54 years	61,540	669	35,186	749	26,355	584
55 years and over	10,215	671	5,684	799	4,531	579
Black						
16 years and over	12,101	511	5,820	538	6,281	494
16 to 24 years	1,133	356	580	349	554	367
25 years and over	10,968	534	5,240	575	5,728	511
25 to 54 years	9,778	535	4,665	577	5,113	512
55 years and over	1,190	522	575	555	614	499
Hispanic origin						
16 years and over	11,582	421	7,067	456	4,515	388
16 to 24 years	1,918	343	1,197	349	721	332
25 years and over	9,664	456	5,870	491	3,794	404
25 to 54 years	8,701	452	5,278	491	3,422	399
55 years and over	964	485	592	488	372	479

NOTE: Detail for the above race and Hispanic-origin groups will not sum to totals because data for the "other races" group are not presented and Hispanics are included in both the white and black population groups.

Table 3. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by occupation and sex, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted

Occupation and sex	Number of workers (in thousands)		Median weekly earnings	
	I 2001	I 2002	I 2001	I 2002
TOTAL				
Managerial and professional specialty	31,990	32,099	\$853	\$887
Executive, administrative, and managerial	15,754	15,823	865	901
Professional specialty	16,236	16,276	844	875
Technical, sales, and administrative support	28,412	27,277	519	550
Technicians and related support	3,715	3,506	660	691
Sales occupations	10,239	9,745	579	603
Administrative support, including clerical	14,458	14,026	483	502
Service occupations	11,025	11,196	367	378
Private household	380	302	265	267
Protective service	2,101	2,314	613	665
Service, except private household and protective	8,544	8,580	330	347
Precision production, craft, and repair	12,120	11,407	622	644
Mechanics and repairers	4,143	3,994	654	679
Construction trades	4,405	4,228	603	623
Other precision production, craft, and repair	3,572	3,185	619	627
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	14,312	13,872	454	486
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	6,220	5,608	446	485
Transportation and material moving occupations	4,108	4,376	556	574
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	3,984	3,888	390	400
Farming, forestry, and fishing	1,196	1,315	370	359
Men				
Managerial and professional specialty	16,179	15,843	1,029	1,053
Executive, administrative, and managerial	8,331	8,263	1,059	1,091
Professional specialty	7,848	7,580	1,009	1,021
Technical, sales, and administrative support	10,708	10,400	681	691
Technicians and related support	1,905	1,717	796	851
Sales occupations	5,617	5,426	725	727
Administrative support, including clerical	3,186	3,257	583	580
Service occupations	5,420	5,474	429	442
Private household	23	14	(¹)	(¹)
Protective service	1,755	1,881	\$639	\$721
Service, except private household and protective	3,642	3,579	366	372
Precision production, craft, and repair	11,016	10,479	643	656
Mechanics and repairers	3,921	3,781	661	683
Construction trades	4,324	4,154	605	623
Other precision production, craft, and repair	2,771	2,544	684	671
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	11,022	10,932	491	516
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	4,030	3,776	504	532
Transportation and material moving occupations	3,731	4,046	576	585
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	3,261	3,111	405	411
Farming, forestry, and fishing	1,036	1,059	376	370
Women				
Managerial and professional specialty	15,811	16,255	731	760
Executive, administrative, and managerial	7,423	7,559	710	741
Professional specialty	8,387	8,696	745	774
Technical, sales, and administrative support	17,704	16,877	469	487
Technicians and related support	1,810	1,788	556	584
Sales occupations	4,622	4,320	423	445
Administrative support, including clerical	11,272	10,769	464	485
Service occupations	5,605	5,722	319	332
Private household	357	288	269	264
Protective service	346	433	483	470
Service, except private household and protective	4,902	5,000	317	328
Precision production, craft, and repair	1,104	928	466	495
Mechanics and repairers	222	213	556	591
Construction trades	81	74	(¹)	(¹)
Other precision production, craft, and repair	801	640	\$432	\$454
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	3,290	2,939	361	388
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	2,190	1,832	368	393
Transportation and material moving occupations	377	330	412	440
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	723	777	317	363
Farming, forestry, and fishing	159	256	344	314

¹ Data not shown where base is less than 100,000.

Table 4. Quartiles and selected deciles of usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, first quarter 2002 averages, not seasonally adjusted

Characteristic	Number of workers (in thousands)	Upper limit of:				
		First decile	First quartile	Second quartile (median)	Third quartile	Ninth decile
SEX, RACE, AND HISPANIC ORIGIN						
Total, 16 years and over	97,165	\$295	\$407	\$614	\$926	\$1,377
Men	54,188	319	455	688	1,031	1,559
Women	42,977	275	370	535	781	1,115
White	80,357	300	417	629	948	1,425
Men	45,739	326	474	708	1,063	1,589
Women	34,618	278	378	549	793	1,133
Black	12,101	276	357	511	757	1,067
Men	5,820	287	378	538	803	1,140
Women	6,281	263	337	494	711	1,010
Hispanic	11,582	244	307	421	631	916
Men	7,067	263	322	456	685	978
Women	4,515	224	286	388	576	775
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT						
Total, 25 years and over	87,004	308	433	649	969	1,443
Less than a high school diploma	8,081	234	291	386	524	733
High school graduates, no college	26,478	291	386	536	756	1,020
Some college or associate degree	24,549	326	447	633	897	1,200
College graduates, total	27,896	483	663	940	1,401	1,975
Bachelor's degree only	18,329	454	622	879	1,284	1,852
Advanced degree	9,567	573	752	1,065	1,593	2,315
Men, 25 years and over	48,548	342	493	734	1,096	1,625
Less than a high school diploma	5,203	255	319	418	594	798
High school graduates, no college	15,083	321	438	617	857	1,143
Some college or associate degree	12,936	370	509	723	999	1,350
College graduates, total	15,326	549	752	1,103	1,632	2,319
Bachelor's degree only	10,019	519	724	1,018	1,510	2,086
Advanced degree	5,307	610	849	1,253	1,878	2,716
Women, 25 years and over	38,456	283	388	574	816	1,151
Less than a high school diploma	2,878	200	258	318	418	556
High school graduates, no college	11,395	261	338	456	613	808
Some college or associate degree	11,613	300	399	556	759	1,016
College graduates, total	12,570	426	597	799	1,102	1,555
Bachelor's degree only	8,310	397	562	752	1,026	1,448
Advanced degree	4,260	524	688	914	1,274	1,751

NOTE: Ten percent of all full-time wage and salary workers earn less than the upper limit of the first decile; 25 percent earn less than the upper limit of the first quartile; 50 percent earn less than the upper limit of the second quartile, or median; 75 percent earn less than the upper limit of the

third quartile; and 90 percent earn less than the upper limit of the ninth decile. Detail for the above race and Hispanic-origin groups will not sum to totals because data for the "other races" group are not presented and Hispanics are included in both the white and black population groups.

Table 5. Median usual weekly earnings of part-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted

Characteristic	Number of workers (in thousands)		Median weekly earnings	
	I 2001	I 2002	I 2001	I 2002
SEX AND AGE				
Total, 16 years and over	21,431	21,658	\$175	\$179
Men, 16 years and over	6,799	6,957	163	170
16 to 24 years	3,696	3,731	129	143
25 years and over	3,103	3,226	221	219
Women, 16 years and over	14,632	14,701	181	184
16 to 24 years	4,752	4,700	127	133
25 years and over	9,880	10,001	214	215
RACE, HISPANIC ORIGIN, AND SEX				
White	18,488	18,564	175	180
Men	5,654	5,796	163	170
Women	12,835	12,767	182	186
Black	1,959	2,061	170	168
Men	737	754	151	168
Women	1,222	1,306	181	168
Hispanic origin	2,027	2,166	175	184
Men	716	716	174	190
Women	1,310	1,451	176	181

NOTE: Detail for the above race and Hispanic-origin groups will not sum to totals because data for the "other races" group are not presented

and Hispanics are included in both the white and black population groups.