

News

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Average Weekly Wages in Maryland: Second Quarter 2007

Montgomery County records 16th highest wages and 23rd fastest wage growth in the nation

In the second quarter of 2007, the average weekly wage in Montgomery County increased by 6.7 percent over the year, the largest advance among Maryland's eight counties (which included one independent city) 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. Baltimore City's 6.3-percent wage growth was the second fastest in the State, followed by Harford County's 5.9-percent increase. Montgomery County also had the highest average weekly wage level in Maryland at \$1,108, followed by Baltimore City (\$973) and Howard County (\$950). Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted that among Maryland's eight large counties, five recorded wage growth above the national rate of 4.6 percent and six had wages above the national average of \$820. (See table 1.)

From a national perspective, Maryland's counties had some of the highest average weekly wages in the country. Montgomery County ranked 16th; Baltimore City, 41st; and Howard County, 47th when wages were compared for all 328 large counties nationwide, placing them in the top quartile in the United States for wage levels. Prince George's County, ranking 66th with an average weekly wage of \$893, was also among the top-paid one-fourth of large counties nationwide. Counties in Maryland also registered some of the largest over-the-year wage gains in the nation in the second quarter of 2007. Montgomery County's wage growth was 23rd highest in the United States, while Baltimore City and Harford County ranked 37th and 50th, respectively. These three counties were also among the top quartile of large counties nationwide in wage growth.

Wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 16 counties in Maryland with employment below 75,000. All but 2 (St. Mary's and Cecil) of these 16 counties had average weekly wages below the national level. (See table 2.)

County Wage Levels

Among Maryland's eight large counties, three—Montgomery, Baltimore City, and Howard—had average weekly wage levels exceeding \$900 in the second quarter of 2007. Prince George's County had the fourth-highest wage level (\$893), followed by Anne Arundel County (\$865), and Baltimore County (\$847). These six large counties, four of which are located in the Baltimore-Towson, Md., metropolitan area and two of which are located in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.-Va.-Md.-W.Va., metropolitan area, were the only large counties in Maryland to record wage levels greater than the nationwide average of \$820. Wages in these counties ranged from 3 percent higher than the U.S. average in Baltimore County to 35 percent higher in Montgomery County.

At the other end of the wage spectrum, Frederick and Harford Counties reported the lowest average weekly wage levels among Maryland's eight largest counties at \$783 and \$753, respectively. These two counties had wages falling \$37 and \$67, respectively, below the national average. Even so, Frederick County's wage level ranked in the top half of the nation at 142nd, while Harford's ranked in the bottom half at 172nd.

Average weekly wages were higher than the national average in 110 of the largest 328 U.S. counties. 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 or around the New York metropolitan area (New York, N.Y.; Fairfield, Conn.; and Somerset, N.J.), while 3 others were located in or around the San Francisco metropolitan area (Santa Clara, Calif.; San Francisco, Calif.; and San Mateo, Calif.), and two more were located in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area (Washington, D.C., and Arlington, Va.). Rounding out the top 10 were Clayton, Ga., and Suffolk, Mass., which were located in the Atlanta and Boston metropolitan areas, respectively.

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).

County Wage Changes

Five of Maryland's eight large counties recorded wage growth above the national increase of 4.6 percent from the second quarter of 2006 to the second quarter of 2007. As mentioned, Montgomery County's 6.7-percent wage gain was the largest increase in the State and 23rd highest in the nation, followed by Baltimore City's 6.3-percent gain (37th), and Harford County's 5.9-percent advance (50th). Howard County, at 5.0 percent (85th), and Baltimore County, at 4.8 percent (98th), also had growth rates above the national average. All five of these counties registered wage growth rates among the highest one-third of large counties in the United States.

Anne Arundel County recorded the smallest over-the-year increase in wages among Maryland's large counties in the second quarter of 2007, at 3.8 percent. Frederick and Prince George's Counties followed with respective wage gains of 4.0 and 4.4 percent. Although wage growth in all three of these counties was below the U. S. average, Anne Arundel (170th) ranked in the bottom half of the 328 large counties nationwide, while Frederick (154th) and Prince George's (130th) ranked in the top half.

Among the largest counties in the United States, 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. 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).

Six large counties experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. The county of Saginaw, Mich., had the greatest decline (-5.2 percent), followed by Orleans County, La. (-2.9 percent).

Wage Levels in Maryland's Smaller Counties

As mentioned, all but 2 of the 16 counties in Maryland with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages below the national level. Worcester County reported the lowest wage level at \$487. The highest wage among Maryland's 16 small counties was St. Mary's County's \$971, followed by Cecil County's \$827.

When all 24 counties in Maryland were considered, only Worcester County had wages below \$500. Thirteen, or more than half, of the counties in Maryland reported average weekly wages from \$501 to \$700 in the second quarter of 2007. Among the higher-paid counties, Montgomery was the only county with wages above \$1,100, while three others had wages ranging from \$901 to \$1,100. Most of the better-paid counties were located in the Baltimore and Washington metropolitan areas. The lowest-paid county, Worcester, was on the Delmarva Peninsula. (See chart 1.)

State Average Weekly Wages

The average weekly wage in Maryland was \$899, \$79 above the national average, ranking it 7th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Nationally, 16 states had average weekly wage levels surpassing the U.S. average; 9 of these, including Maryland, fell in a contiguous band along the east coast stretching from New Hampshire to Virginia. The five highest wage levels in the nation were in the District of Columbia (\$1,357), Connecticut (\$1,033), New York (\$1,020), Massachusetts (\$1,008), and New Jersey (\$989). Average weekly wages in this group were 21 percent or more 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). (See table 3.)

Wyoming recorded the fastest wage growth (8.0 percent) among the states in the second quarter of 2007. Five other states experienced wage growth above 6.0 percent from the second quarter of 2006—Utah (6.6 percent), Georgia (6.5 percent), Connecticut (6.4 percent), and Montana and New Hampshire (6.3 percent each). 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 decline.

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 of those covered by UI programs; this result is then 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. 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 2006 bulletin will also be available in a portable document format (PDF) on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn06.htm>. In addition, 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 <http://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 data, as well as other Bureau data, 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, <http://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 8 largest counties in Maryland, second quarter 2007²

Area	Employment	Average weekly wage ³			
	June 2007 (thousands)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁴	Percent change, second quarter 2006-07 ⁵	National ranking by percent change ⁴
United States ⁶	137,018.2	\$820	–	4.6	–
Maryland	2,584.9	899	7	5.3	12
Anne Arundel	236.0	865	84	3.8	170
Baltimore City	346.5	973	41	6.3	37
Baltimore	380.6	847	93	4.8	98
Frederick	96.6	783	142	4.0	154
Harford	86.0	753	172	5.9	50
Howard	149.6	950	47	5.0	85
Montgomery	466.7	1,108	16	6.7	23
Prince George's	317.4	893	66	4.4	130

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 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 Maryland, second quarter 2007²

Area	Employment June 2007 (thousands)	Average weekly wage ³
United States ⁴	137,018.2	\$820
Maryland	2,584.9	899
Allegany	29.9	602
Anne Arundel	236.0	865
Baltimore County	380.6	847
Calvert	22.4	700
Caroline	9.1	579
Carroll	57.9	651
Cecil	31.4	827
Charles	42.6	699
Dorchester	12.3	596
Frederick	96.6	783
Garrett	12.1	516
Harford	86.0	753
Howard	149.6	950
Kent	8.9	629
Montgomery	466.7	1,108
Prince George's	317.4	893
Queen Anne's	14.7	588
St. Mary's	39.4	971
Somerset	7.2	677
Talbot	20.0	628
Washington	67.3	664
Wicomico	47.6	663
Worcester	29.9	487
Baltimore City	346.5	973

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, second quarter 2007²

State	Employment	Average weekly wage ³			
	June 2007 (thousands)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, second quarter 2006-07	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁴	137,018.2	\$820	—	4.6	—
Alabama	1,965.4	697	38	3.6	38
Alaska	325.8	832	13	5.6	9
Arizona	2,612.4	786	20	4.4	23
Arkansas	1,186.5	639	46	4.2	28
California	15,832.5	935	6	5.4	11
Colorado	2,326.9	832	13	4.8	15
Connecticut	1,714.2	1,033	2	6.4	4
Delaware	430.2	870	9	2.2	51
District of Columbia	683.2	1,357	1	4.3	26
Florida	7,894.2	743	23	3.2	45
Georgia	4,091.5	792	19	6.5	3
Hawaii	631.2	736	27	4.2	28
Idaho	679.1	626	47	2.3	50
Illinois	5,956.3	874	8	4.4	23
Indiana	2,933.4	702	33	2.6	48
Iowa	1,518.6	664	42	3.9	35
Kansas	1,370.7	702	33	4.8	15
Kentucky	1,828.2	700	35	4.2	28
Louisiana	1,880.2	711	31	4.1	31
Maine	619.6	658	44	4.1	31
Maryland	2,584.9	899	7	5.3	12
Massachusetts	3,300.7	1,008	4	4.8	15
Michigan	4,252.9	807	17	2.9	46
Minnesota	2,730.9	834	12	5.6	9
Mississippi	1,137.4	609	50	3.6	38
Missouri	2,764.6	727	29	3.4	43
Montana	449.8	611	49	6.3	5
Nebraska	930.9	654	45	3.5	42
Nevada	1,297.9	776	21	3.7	36
New Hampshire	643.7	823	16	6.3	5
New Jersey	4,066.7	989	5	4.3	26
New Mexico	833.3	686	39	5.2	13
New York	8,688.8	1,020	3	5.9	7
North Carolina	4,090.5	718	30	4.1	31
North Dakota	347.7	619	48	4.7	19
Ohio	5,384.6	740	25	3.4	43
Oklahoma	1,538.5	665	40	4.1	31
Oregon	1,761.6	742	24	4.5	22
Pennsylvania	5,740.3	802	18	4.6	20
Rhode Island	492.9	774	22	2.5	49
South Carolina	1,917.4	665	40	2.9	46
South Dakota	404.3	590	51	4.8	15
Tennessee	2,768.7	729	28	3.6	38
Texas	10,296.1	827	15	5.9	7
Utah	1,233.7	698	36	6.6	2
Vermont	306.6	698	36	5.0	14
Virginia	3,731.5	859	10	4.4	23
Washington	2,989.8	835	11	4.6	20
West Virginia	717.1	659	43	3.6	38
Wisconsin	2,845.8	709	32	3.7	36
Wyoming	288.3	739	26	8.0	1
Puerto Rico	1,020.7	460	(5)	6.0	(5)
Virgin Islands	46.9	707	(5)	4.1	(5)

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

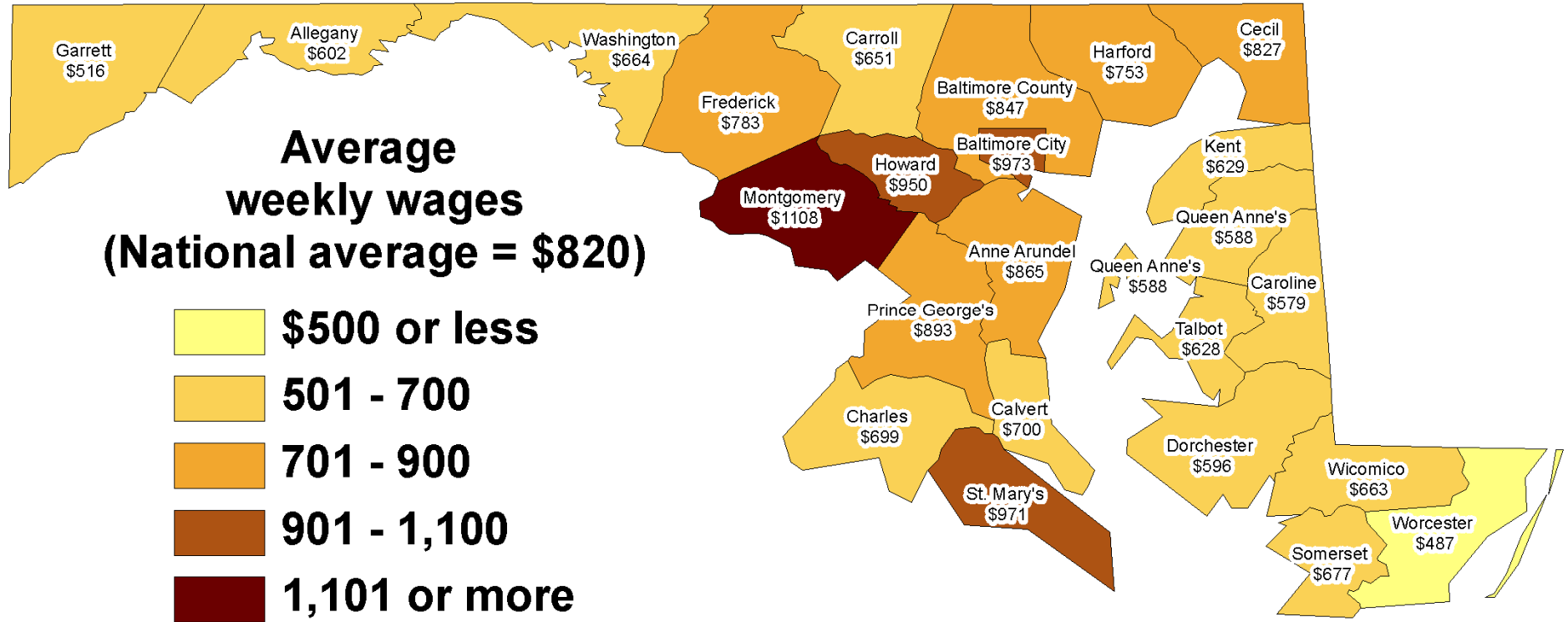
² Data are preliminary.

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.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in Maryland, second quarter 2007¹



¹ Data are preliminary.