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

Median weekly earnings of the nation's 98.7 million full-time wage and salary workers were $608 in the second quarter of 2002, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. This was 2.2 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 second-quarter data are:

—Women who usually worked full time had median earnings of $521 per week, or 76.3 percent of the $683 median for men. The female-to-male earnings ratios were higher among blacks (88.0 percent) and Hispanics (85.7 percent) than among whites (75.5 percent). (See table 1.)

—Median earnings for black men working at full-time jobs were $535 per week, 75.4 percent of the median for white men ($710). The difference was much less among women, as black women's median earnings ($471) were 87.9 percent of those for their white counterparts ($536). Overall, median earnings of Hispanics who worked full time ($421) were lower than those of blacks ($502) and whites ($625). (See table 1.)

—Among men, the $831 median weekly earnings of 45- to 54-year-olds was the highest of any age group. Among women, earnings also were highest for those 45 to 54 years old ($589). (See table 2.)

—Among the major occupational groups, persons employed full time in managerial and professional specialty occupations had the highest median weekly earnings—$1,049 for men and $755 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 $392, compared with $535 for high school graduates (no college) and $943 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 $2,436 or more per week, compared with $1,753 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			
			In current dollars		In constant (1982) dollars	
	II 2001	II 2002	II 2001	II 2002	II 2001	II 2002
SEX AND AGE						
Total, 16 years and over	99,917	98,730	$595	$608	$323	$326
Men, 16 years and over	55,896	55,604	667	683	363	367
16 to 24 years	6,385	6,340	394	399	214	214
25 years and over	49,511	49,264	716	738	389	396
Women, 16 years and over	44,021	43,126	514	521	280	280
16 to 24 years	5,240	4,981	348	356	189	191
25 years and over	38,781	38,145	547	562	297	301
RACE, HISPANIC ORIGIN, AND SEX						
White	82,348	81,281	609	625	331	335
Men	47,292	46,918	687	710	374	381
Women	35,056	34,363	522	536	284	288
Black	12,635	12,382	495	502	269	269
Men	5,887	5,964	537	535	292	287
Women	6,747	6,418	460	471	250	253
Hispanic origin	12,012	11,859	417	421	227	226
Men	7,375	7,291	445	456	242	245
Women	4,637	4,568	383	391	208	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, second 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	98,730	$608	55,604	$683	43,126	$521
16 to 24 years	11,321	378	6,340	399	4,981	356
16 to 19 years	1,973	302	1,153	306	819	295
20 to 24 years	9,348	400	5,187	422	4,161	370
25 years and over	87,409	647	49,264	738	38,145	562
25 to 54 years	75,434	647	42,595	732	32,839	565
25 to 34 years	23,751	588	13,674	624	10,077	522
35 to 44 years	27,899	669	15,990	761	11,909	580
45 to 54 years	23,784	711	12,931	831	10,853	589
55 years and over	11,975	648	6,669	773	5,306	542
55 to 64 years	10,317	671	5,725	801	4,592	561
65 years and over	1,658	501	944	585	714	447
White						
16 years and over	81,281	625	46,918	710	34,363	536
16 to 24 years	9,436	384	5,390	404	4,046	359
25 years and over	71,846	673	41,529	761	30,317	579
25 to 54 years	61,518	673	35,710	756	25,808	582
55 years and over	10,328	673	5,819	806	4,509	559
Black						
16 years and over	12,382	502	5,964	535	6,418	471
16 to 24 years	1,424	350	707	364	718	343
25 years and over	10,958	521	5,257	575	5,700	489
25 to 54 years	9,783	521	4,661	575	5,123	491
55 years and over	1,175	515	597	567	578	475
Hispanic origin						
16 years and over	11,859	421	7,291	456	4,568	391
16 to 24 years	2,021	334	1,287	359	734	303
25 years and over	9,838	458	6,004	489	3,834	413
25 to 54 years	8,922	459	5,484	490	3,438	412
55 years and over	916	457	520	471	396	432

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	
	II 2001	II 2002	II 2001	II 2002
TOTAL				
Managerial and professional specialty	32,209	32,118	$846	$884
Executive, administrative, and managerial	15,891	15,923	846	893
Professional specialty	16,318	16,195	845	877
Technical, sales, and administrative support	28,116	27,728	523	543
Technicians and related support	3,673	3,563	659	664
Sales occupations	10,212	10,353	576	593
Administrative support, including clerical	14,231	13,811	489	503
Service occupations	10,951	11,096	379	384
Private household	328	302	245	328
Protective service	2,231	2,236	618	646
Service, except private household and protective	8,393	8,558	348	356
Precision production, craft, and repair	12,027	11,614	620	625
Mechanics and repairers	4,189	3,979	642	678
Construction trades	4,334	4,404	606	604
Other precision production, craft, and repair	3,504	3,231	620	604
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	14,983	14,556	476	486
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	6,341	5,847	464	470
Transportation and material moving occupations	4,631	4,737	583	582
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	4,011	3,971	396	399
Farming, forestry, and fishing	1,631	1,617	346	360
Men				
Managerial and professional specialty	16,174	16,210	1,017	1,049
Executive, administrative, and managerial	8,334	8,530	1,009	1,088
Professional specialty	7,840	7,680	1,025	1,013
Technical, sales, and administrative support	10,502	10,824	665	708
Technicians and related support	1,853	1,768	750	823
Sales occupations	5,616	5,816	704	762
Administrative support, including clerical	3,032	3,240	574	599
Service occupations	5,200	5,187	437	443
Private household	10	20	([1])	([1])
Protective service	1,834	1,795	$655	$689
Service, except private household and protective	3,355	3,372	374	382
Precision production, craft, and repair	11,111	10,681	636	642
Mechanics and repairers	4,043	3,777	650	680
Construction trades	4,229	4,297	608	606
Other precision production, craft, and repair	2,839	2,606	677	643
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	11,586	11,345	505	517
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	4,093	3,825	518	521
Transportation and material moving occupations	4,306	4,354	595	592
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	3,188	3,166	405	411
Farming, forestry, and fishing	1,323	1,356	357	373
Women				
Managerial and professional specialty	16,035	15,908	728	755
Executive, administrative, and managerial	7,557	7,393	700	735
Professional specialty	8,478	8,515	745	773
Technical, sales, and administrative support	17,614	16,903	478	485
Technicians and related support	1,820	1,795	586	587
Sales occupations	4,595	4,537	434	433
Administrative support, including clerical	11,199	10,571	475	487
Service occupations	5,751	5,909	332	346
Private household	317	282	246	328
Protective service	396	442	517	512
Service, except private household and protective	5,038	5,185	327	339
Precision production, craft, and repair	915	933	477	459
Mechanics and repairers	146	202	528	580
Construction trades	105	107	536	500
Other precision production, craft, and repair	665	625	447	418
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	3,397	3,211	366	384
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	2,249	2,022	364	383
Transportation and material moving occupations	325	383	458	482
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	823	805	354	355
Farming, forestry, and fishing	309	261	312	296

[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, second 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	98,730	$297	$405	$608	$924	$1,374
Men	55,604	318	453	683	1,035	1,544
Women	43,126	280	367	521	772	1,127
White	81,281	302	415	625	954	1,423
Men	46,918	324	469	710	1,072	1,595
Women	34,363	282	377	536	790	1,148
Black	12,382	278	352	502	724	1,001
Men	5,964	290	387	535	759	1,080
Women	6,418	265	328	471	664	925
Hispanic	11,859	250	312	421	637	941
Men	7,291	271	327	456	667	1,001
Women	4,568	232	290	391	589	844
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT						
Total, 25 years and over	87,409	315	436	647	971	1,434
Less than a high school diploma	8,445	239	299	392	534	741
High school graduates, no college	26,674	295	392	535	759	1,030
Some college or associate degree	23,814	337	453	636	890	1,236
College graduates, total	28,476	460	647	943	1,370	1,905
Bachelor's degree only	18,912	430	608	871	1,254	1,770
Advanced degree	9,564	557	763	1,109	1,568	2,122
Men, 25 years and over	49,264	347	495	738	1,106	1,614
Less than a high school diploma	5,554	261	326	443	606	816
High school graduates, no college	15,013	329	447	618	871	1,169
Some college or associate degree	12,726	380	521	743	1,002	1,408
College graduates, total	15,970	501	732	1,083	1,560	2,196
Bachelor's degree only	10,610	479	671	992	1,433	1,967
Advanced degree	5,360	593	866	1,262	1,774	2,436
Women, 25 years and over	38,145	291	390	562	811	1,161
Less than a high school diploma	2,891	212	269	324	411	518
High school graduates, no college	11,662	272	345	460	618	816
Some college or associate degree	11,087	311	399	540	748	983
College graduates, total	12,506	424	594	803	1,135	1,541
Bachelor's degree only	8,302	396	548	746	1,042	1,399
Advanced degree	4,203	525	690	935	1,301	1,753

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	
	II 2001	II 2002	II 2001	II 2002
SEX AND AGE				
Total, 16 years and over	20,956	21,260	$176	$189
Men, 16 years and over	6,953	6,808	160	181
16 to 24 years	3,805	3,567	135	149
25 years and over	3,147	3,241	215	228
Women, 16 years and over	14,003	14,451	186	194
16 to 24 years	4,441	4,527	134	138
25 years and over	9,562	9,924	220	230
RACE, HISPANIC ORIGIN, AND SEX				
White	18,167	18,368	178	190
Men	5,855	5,707	161	176
Women	12,312	12,661	188	196
Black	1,924	1,989	162	186
Men	694	726	146	203
Women	1,230	1,264	170	176
Hispanic origin	1,876	2,178	178	183
Men	765	723	180	190
Women	1,111	1,455	177	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.