

# News

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## **AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES IN ALASKA: SECOND QUARTER 2007** **Anchorage Borough wages and wage growth above national average**

The average weekly wage in Anchorage Borough was \$887 in the second quarter of 2007, 5.7 percent higher than a year earlier, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Nationally, weekly wages averaged \$820, growing 4.6 percent over the year. Regional Commissioner Richard J. Holden noted that Anchorage Borough ranked 54<sup>th</sup> in terms of wage growth and 69<sup>th</sup> in terms of wage level among the 328 largest counties nationwide. Anchorage Borough was the only large county in Alaska—that is, it had 75,000 or more jobs as measured by 2006 annual average employment.

### **County Wage Levels**

Average weekly wages were higher than the nationwide 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 \$1540. 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).

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**

Over the year, the national average weekly wage rose by 4.6 percent. 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. 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 greatest decline (-5.2 percent), followed by Orleans County, La. (-2.9 percent).

## State Average Weekly Wages

At the state level, the average weekly wage in Alaska was \$832, \$12 above that for the nation, ranking it 13<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. (See table 2.) Across the country, the five highest average wage levels 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 more than 20 percent above the national average. In contrast, three states had average weekly wage levels at or less than 75 percent of the national average: South Dakota (\$590) Mississippi (\$609), and Montana (\$611).

With wage growth of 5.6 percent from the second quarter of 2006 to the second quarter of 2007, Alaska ranked 9<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states and District of Columbia. The highest over-the-year percentage increase in wages for the second quarter of 2007 was recorded by Wyoming (8.0 percent), followed by Utah (6.6 percent). None of the states recorded an over-the-year decline in wages. Delaware posted the smallest growth, up 2.2 percent.

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 is computed by dividing the total quarterly payroll of employees covered by UI programs by the average monthly number of these employees. This number 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. 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 this 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. Also, the 2006 bulletin will 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/>.

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>.

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 Western Information Office in San Francisco at (415) 625-2270 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 to 4:00 PT.

### **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 largest county in Alaska, second quarter 2007 (2) from Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages**

Area	Employment		Average Weekly Wage (3)			
	June 2007 (thousands)	Percent change, second quarter 2006-07 (5)	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	1.2	\$820	--	4.6	--
Alaska	325.8	-0.5	832	13	5.6	9
Anchorage Borough	148.9	-1.3	887	69	5.7	54

(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.

(7) Data do not meet BLS or State agency disclosure standards.

**Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages by state, second quarter 2007 (2) from Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages**

State	Employment		Average weekly wage (3)			National ranking by percent change
	June 2007 (thousands)	Percent change, second quarter 2006-07	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, second quarter 2006-07	
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.