

News

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COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES, ARIZONA SECOND QUARTER 2008

The average weekly wage in Maricopa County was \$845 in the second quarter of 2008, 2.1 percent higher than a year earlier, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Pima County's weekly wage averaged \$748, increasing 2.0 percent over the year. Maricopa and Pima were the only large counties in Arizona, those with 75,000 or more jobs as measured by 2007 annual average employment. Regional Commissioner Richard J. Holden noted that nationally, the average weekly wage was \$841, growing 2.6 percent over the year. (See table 1.)

Maricopa County's average weekly wage ranked 105th, in the top half among the nation's 334 largest counties, while Pima County's average weekly wage placed in the bottom half at 205th. However, both counties fell in the bottom half of the national ranking in over-the-year wage growth—Maricopa at 203rd and Pima at 212th.

Employment in Maricopa and Pima Counties combined accounted for nearly 83 percent of statewide employment in June 2008. Both counties experienced over-the-year employment declines at a pace faster than the national average of -0.3 percent. Maricopa County's employment fell 3.1 percent and Pima County's declined 1.9 percent from June 2007 to June 2008. It should be noted that Maricopa County's employment level of 1,741,000 in June 2008 was down 55,100 over the year. This was the largest employment level decline in the nation; the next largest was in Riverside, Calif. (-29,400).

Large County Average Weekly Wages

Average weekly wages were higher than the nationwide average in 109 of the largest 334 counties. New York County, N.Y., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$1,569. Santa Clara, Calif., was second at \$1,529, followed by Washington, D.C. (\$1,433), Arlington, Va. (\$1,376), and San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,334).

There were 224 counties with an average weekly wage below the national average in the second quarter of 2008. The lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron County, Texas (\$535), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$538), Horry, S.C. (\$539), Webb, Texas (\$562), and Yakima, Wash. (\$580).

Large County Wage Changes

Across the country, Rock Island, County, Ill., led the nation in average weekly wage growth with an increase of 10.5 percent from the second quarter of 2007 to the second quarter of 2008. Weld, Colo., was second with growth of 10.4 percent, followed by the counties of Utah, Utah (9.4 percent), Whatcom, Wash. (8.3 percent), and East Baton Rouge, La. (7.8 percent).

Nationally, 26 large counties experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. Clayton, Ga., had the greatest decline (-43.7 percent), followed by the counties of Boone, Ky. (-10.0 percent), Ventura, Calif., and Trumbull, Ohio (-4.8 percent each), and Queens, N.Y. (-4.3 percent).

State Average Weekly Wages

At the state level, Arizona had an average weekly wage of \$806 in the second quarter of 2008, \$35 below that for the nation, ranking it 19th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Across the country, the four highest average weekly wages were in the District of Columbia (\$1,433), Massachusetts (\$1,044), New York (\$1,040), and Connecticut (\$1,036). Average weekly wages in this group were more than 20 percent above the national average. In contrast, two states had average weekly wage levels at or less than 75 percent of the national average—South Dakota (\$606) and Montana (\$629).

With wage growth of 2.4 percent from the second quarter of 2007 to the second quarter of 2008, Arizona ranked 34th among the 50 states and District of Columbia. The fastest over-the-year wage growth was recorded by Washington D.C. (5.9 percent), followed by North Dakota (5.8 percent). Two states recorded an over-the-year decline in wages—Delaware (-0.8 percent) and Georgia (-0.6 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 summaries of employment and total pay of workers covered by state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) legislation and provided by State Workforce Agencies (SWAs). The 9.1 million employer reports cover 136.6 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. The 2007 edition of this bulletin contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2008 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from the 2007 Employment and Wages Annual Bulletin are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn07.htm. These tables present final 2007 annual averages. The tables will also be included on the CD which

accompanies the hardcopy version of the Annual Bulletin. *Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2007* will be available for sale as a chartbook by the end of the first quarter in 2009 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.

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 not designed as a time series. QCEW data are simply the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. Establishments can move in or out of a county or industry for a number of reasons—some reflecting economic events, others reflecting administrative changes.

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. These potential differences result from the states' 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 2 largest counties in Arizona, second quarter 2008[2]

Area	Employment		Average Weekly Wage [3]			
	June 2008 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2007-08 [4]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [5]	Percent change, second quarter 2007-08 [4]	National ranking by percent change [5]
United States [6]	136,631.8	-0.3	\$841	--	2.6	--
Arizona	2,543.9	-2.6	806	19	2.4	34
Maricopa, Ariz.	1,741.0	-3.1	845	105	2.1	203
Pima, Ariz.	364.8	-1.9	748	205	2.0	212

[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] Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

[5] Ranking does not include the county of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

[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 2008[2]

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [3]			
	June 2008 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2007-08	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, second quarter 2007-08	National ranking by percent change
United States [4]	136,631.8	-0.3	\$841	-	2.6	-
Alabama	1,955.4	-0.5	720	33	3.3	15
Alaska	330.6	1.4	860	12	3.1	16
Arizona	2,543.9	-2.6	806	19	2.4	34
Arkansas	1,183.5	-0.2	661	46	3.4	11
California	15,760.3	-0.5	955	6	2.2	42
Colorado	2,346.3	0.8	858	13	3.1	16
Connecticut	1,722.3	0.5	1,036	4	0.3	49
Delaware	427.3	-0.9	862	10	-0.8	51
District of Columbia	691.4	1.2	1,433	1	5.9	1
Florida	7,620.1	-3.4	762	26	2.6	30
Georgia	4,059.7	-0.6	787	22	-0.6	50
Hawaii	623.9	-1.3	764	24	3.9	9
Idaho	671.9	-0.9	636	48	1.6	46
Illinois	5,930.0	-0.4	893	8	2.3	39
Indiana	2,906.5	-0.9	715	38	1.9	43
Iowa	1,521.2	0.1	683	42	2.9	23
Kansas	1,389.1	1.2	720	33	2.4	34
Kentucky	1,818.9	-0.5	718	35	2.6	30
Louisiana	1,900.3	1.2	750	29	5.5	3
Maine	620.3	0.1	676	44	2.7	28
Maryland	2,577.7	-0.3	920	7	2.8	26
Massachusetts	3,310.4	0.1	1,044	2	3.6	10
Michigan	4,163.3	-2.2	825	18	2.4	34
Minnesota	2,733.9	-0.5	849	14	1.8	45
Mississippi	1,139.1	0.1	635	49	4.4	7
Missouri	2,761.6	0.0	752	28	3.4	11
Montana	450.3	0.1	629	50	2.9	23
Nebraska	936.1	0.5	676	44	3.4	11
Nevada	1,271.8	-1.9	797	20	2.7	28
New Hampshire	641.9	-0.4	835	16	1.5	48
New Jersey	4,054.4	-0.4	1,004	5	1.6	46
New Mexico	837.2	0.6	715	38	4.2	8
New York	8,758.2	0.6	1,040	3	2.3	39
North Carolina	4,083.6	-0.1	735	31	2.4	34
North Dakota	356.4	2.5	654	47	5.8	2
Ohio	5,315.0	-1.3	757	27	2.3	39
Oklahoma	1,556.0	1.0	701	40	5.3	5
Oregon	1,747.4	-0.8	764	24	3.0	20
Pennsylvania	5,743.3	0.1	827	17	3.1	16
Rhode Island	481.6	-2.2	796	21	2.8	26
South Carolina	1,907.5	-0.6	681	43	2.4	34
South Dakota	409.0	1.2	606	51	2.9	23
Tennessee	2,752.7	-0.4	745	30	1.9	43
Texas	10,510.3	2.2	849	14	2.5	33
Utah	1,234.3	0.1	716	37	2.6	30
Vermont	305.6	-0.9	718	35	3.0	20
Virginia	3,720.4	-0.3	885	9	3.0	20
Washington	3,000.9	0.3	862	10	3.4	11
West Virginia	715.3	0.0	695	41	5.1	6
Wisconsin	2,836.8	-0.5	730	32	3.1	16
Wyoming	296.7	2.7	780	23	5.4	4
Puerto Rico	997.8	-2.0	475	[5]	3.5	[5]
Virgin Islands	45.9	-2.2	703	[5]	-0.6	[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.