

News

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COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN CALIFORNIA FOURTH QUARTER 2007

The average weekly wage in both Santa Clara County and neighboring San Mateo County increased 8.0 percent from the fourth quarter of 2006 to the fourth quarter of 2007. This represented the largest advance among California's 27 large counties 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. Regional Commissioner Richard J. Holden noted that 15 of the State's large counties had wage growth above the 4.2-percent national average. Santa Clara County also recorded the highest average weekly wage in the State at \$1,700; in addition, seven other counties had wages above \$1,000 and three more exceeded the U.S. average of \$898. (See table 1.)

Among the 27 large counties in California, Los Angeles County had the highest employment level, 4,293,400 in December 2007, which accounted for more than 27 percent of the State's workforce. Two other counties had employment counts exceeding 1 million—Orange and San Diego. Twelve of the State's large counties recorded employment growth close to or above the national increase of 0.8 percent in the fourth quarter of 2007, while 8 counties recorded employment declines.

Large Counties Average Weekly Wages

Of the State's eight counties with wages surpassing \$1,000 in the fourth quarter of 2007, six were located in the San Francisco Bay Area—Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara. The remaining two counties were located in southern California—Los Angeles and Orange. Santa Clara's average weekly wage of \$1,700 was more than \$800 above the U.S. average, ranking second highest in the nation among the 328 largest counties. San Francisco (\$1,529) and San Mateo (\$1,513) ranked fifth and sixth highest nationally, respectively. All of the 11 large counties in the State that had wages above the national average ranked in the top quartile nationwide. At the lower end of the wage spectrum, six counties had wages that fell in to the bottom quartile, with Tulare's wage (\$629) the lowest in the State and seventh lowest in the nation (322nd).

Average weekly wages were higher than the national average in 106 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 \$1,862. Other counties in the top 10 included the 3 previously mentioned counties in the San Francisco Bay Area, 3 others in the greater New York metropolitan area (New York, N.Y., Fairfield, Conn., and Somerset, N.J.), 3 more in the

Washington D.C. metropolitan area (Washington, D.C., Arlington, Va., and Fairfax, Va.), and Suffolk County, Mass., part of the Boston metropolitan area.

There were 222 counties with an average weekly wage below the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2007. The lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron County, Texas (\$555), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$562), Horry, S.C. (\$582), Webb, Texas (\$590), and Yakima, Wash. (\$596). The average weekly wage in the lowest-paid county, Cameron, was less than one-third the wage in the highest-paid county, New York.

Wage Changes in Large Counties

More than half (15) of California's 27 large counties recorded wage growth above the U.S. average of 4.2 percent in the fourth quarter of 2007. (See table 1.) San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties, each with 8.0 percent growth, ranked 9th highest in the nation. In contrast, 11 of California's large counties experienced below-average wage growth. The counties of Placer (0.8 percent/300th) and Monterey (1.0 percent/299th) had the slowest rates of growth in the State and among the lowest in the nation.

Among the nation's largest counties, Pulaski County, Ark., led in average weekly wage growth, with an increase of 26.2 percent from the fourth quarter of 2006. Williamson County, Texas, was second with growth of 16.5 percent, followed by the counties of Lake, Ill. (15.6 percent), Douglas, Colo. (12.6 percent), and Westmoreland, Pa. (9.8 percent).

Seven large counties experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. The largest decreases in wages occurred in the counties of Rockingham N.H. (-12.4 percent), Trumbull, Ohio (-7.2 percent), Sedgwick, Kan. (-4.1 percent), and Lake, Fla. (-3.9 percent).

State Average Weekly Wages

The weekly wage in California averaged \$1,035 and ranked 6th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. California was one of six nationwide with average weekly earnings exceeding \$1,000, more than 15 percent above that for the nation. The others were the District of Columbia (\$1,506), New York (\$1,152), Connecticut (\$1,149), Massachusetts (\$1,133), and New Jersey (\$1,092). (See table 2.) At the other end of the scale, three states reported wages less than 75 percent of the national average: South Dakota (\$647), Mississippi (\$654), and Montana (\$659).

California experienced wage growth of 4.8 percent from the fourth quarter of 2006 to the fourth quarter of 2007, ranking 18th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The five highest over-the-year wage gains in the fourth quarter of 2007 were recorded by Arkansas (9.2 percent), North Dakota (7.3 percent), Wyoming (7.1 percent), Nevada (6.7 percent), and Oklahoma (6.2 percent). The smallest wage gains among the states were registered in Idaho (2.1 percent), Indiana (2.2 percent), and Michigan (2.5 percent). New Hampshire was the only state to experience an over-the-year decline in wages, down 0.3 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 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. The 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 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 contains 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 includes the data on a CD for enhanced access and usability with the printed booklet containing selected graphic representation of QCEW data; the data tables themselves are published exclusively in electronic formats as PDF. The 2006 bulletin is available in a PDF on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn06.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 at 415-625-2270 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. 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 6 largest counties in Calif

Area	Employment		Average Weekly Wage [3]			
	December 2007 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2006-07[5]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [4]	Percent change, fourth quarter 2006-07 [5]	National ranking by percent change [4]
United States [6]	137,027.3	0.8	\$898	--	4.2	--
Calif.	15,794.7	0.8	1,035	6	4.8	18
Alameda, Calif.	692.7	0.3	1,165	21	5.1	68
Butte, Calif.	76.5	0.0	669	313	5.9	35
Contra Costa, Calif.	348.0	-0.8	1,117	31	5.9	35
Fresno, Calif.	352.7	-0.3	724	278	4.9	80
Kern, Calif.	288.5	1.2	761	243	5.4	53
Los Angeles, Calif.	4,293.4	0.8	1,054	45	3.7	152
Marin, Calif.	110.9	0.9	1,170	19	2.5	245
Monterey, Calif.	156.9	5.2	773	223	1.0	299
Orange, Calif.	1,517.7	-1.6	1,027	51	2.8	226
Placer, Calif.	136.8	-0.1	875	120	0.8	300
Riverside, Calif.	634.1	-0.9	730	272	2.7	236
Sacramento, Calif.	633.6	0.3	974	65	4.6	101
San Bernardino, Calif.	672.9	-0.1	766	232	2.8	226
San Diego, Calif.	1,340.3	0.1	963	68	4.4	116
San Francisco, Calif.	573.2	4.0	1,529	5	4.7	94
San Joaquin, Calif.	223.6	0.0	771	226	3.6	164
San Luis Obispo, Calif.	105.1	1.2	750	251	4.6	101
San Mateo, Calif.	347.6	0.7	1,513	6	8.0	9
Santa Barbara, Calif.	183.1	0.7	852	143	4.9	80
Santa Clara, Calif.	913.9	1.5	1,700	2	8.0	9
Santa Cruz, Calif.	94.4	2.0	851	144	5.2	62
Solano, Calif.	127.7	0.1	870	126	6.9	20
Sonoma, Calif.	194.1	0.2	873	124	3.7	152
Stanislaus, Calif.	173.1	-0.6	733	270	3.2	198
Tulare, Calif.	152.4	3.6	629	322	5.4	53
Ventura, Calif.	319.0	-1.0	979	63	3.5	172

[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 1. Covered (1) employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2007(2)

State	Employment		Average weekly wage (3)			
	December 2007 (thousand)	Percent change, fourth quarter 2006-07(4)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2006-07(4)	National ranking by percent change
United States (4)	137,027.3	0.8	\$898	-	4.2	-
Alabama	1,971.0	1.2	762	33	3.3	39
Alaska	299.4	1.0	877	16	4.9	15
Arizona	2,693.3	-0.1	827	22	2.6	46
Arkansas	1,187.6	0.7	712	44	9.2	1
California	15,794.7	0.8	1,035	6	4.8	18
Colorado	2,329.9	2.0	927	9	5.7	7
Connecticut	1,717.8	0.7	1,149	3	4.5	26
Delaware	428.8	0.3	926	10	3.3	39
District of Columbia	681.6	0.7	1,506	1	5.8	6
Florida	8,024.3	-1.3	810	25	2.8	43
Georgia	4,111.5	0.6	835	21	2.8	43
Hawaii	637.2	0.7	793	28	4.1	29
Idaho	660.2	1.7	686	47	2.1	50
Illinois	5,933.0	0.6	975	8	5.1	13
Indiana	2,929.1	0.1	745	35	3.0	42
Iowa	1,498.5	0.7	732	39	4.9	15
Kansas	1,372.7	1.2	745	35	2.6	46
Kentucky	1,830.5	0.8	732	39	3.4	38
Louisiana	1,903.1	2.3	783	29	4.7	20
Maine	608.8	0.8	707	45	4.1	29
Maryland	2,580.1	0.4	986	7	4.7	20
Massachusetts	3,270.9	0.7	1,133	4	5.4	8
Michigan	4,194.9	-1.2	873	17	2.5	49
Minnesota	2,708.7	0.8	883	15	5.1	13
Mississippi	1,148.9	0.7	654	50	3.8	34
Missouri	2,746.2	0.3	780	30	5.3	11
Montana	440.4	2.1	659	49	5.4	8
Nebraska	925.2	1.3	723	41	5.2	12
Nevada	1,290.8	0.4	872	19	6.7	4
New Hampshire	638.8	0.3	914	12	-0.3	51
New Jersey	4,027.4	0.2	1,092	5	3.5	36
New Mexico	831.7	1.1	738	38	4.8	18
New York	8,762.7	1.4	1,152	2	4.2	27
North Carolina	4,127.7	1.5	777	31	3.5	36
North Dakota	347.7	2.0	690	46	7.3	2
Ohio	5,336.8	-0.2	795	27	2.8	43
Oklahoma	1,556.1	1.3	721	42	6.2	5
Oregon	1,740.5	0.9	798	26	4.6	22
Pennsylvania	5,712.8	0.5	873	17	4.2	27
Rhode Island	480.9	-1.5	838	20	2.6	46
South Carolina	1,904.0	1.0	716	43	4.1	29
South Dakota	393.5	1.7	647	51	5.4	8
Tennessee	2,790.3	0.9	813	24	4.0	33
Texas	10,460.8	3.0	911	13	4.6	22
Utah	1,241.8	2.8	758	34	4.6	22
Vermont	309.1	-0.2	743	37	4.9	15
Virginia	3,709.0	0.7	921	11	3.8	34
Washington	2,936.0	2.6	885	14	4.6	22
West Virginia	716.8	0.4	683	48	4.1	29
Wisconsin	2,803.9	0.3	769	32	3.1	41
Wyoming	279.6	3.0	815	23	7.1	3
Puerto Rico	1,055.2	-1.4	517	(5)	4.4	(5)
Virgin Islands	46.0	0.6	738	(5)	3.9	(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.