

News

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EMPLOYMENT COST INDEX—MARCH 1999

The Employment Cost Index (not seasonally adjusted) for March 1999 was 140.4 (June 1989=100), an increase of 3.0 percent from March 1998, the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. The Employment Cost Index (ECI) measures changes in compensation costs, which include wages, salaries, and employer costs for employee benefits.

Quarterly changes, seasonally adjusted

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the 3-month increase in compensation costs for civilian workers (private nonfarm industry plus state and local government) was 0.4 percent during the December 1998-March 1999 period, following a gain of 0.7 percent in December. The gain for wages and salaries was 0.5 percent during the December 1998-March 1999 period and 0.7 percent in the previous 3-month period. Benefit costs rose 0.3 percent during the December 1998-March 1999 period and 0.6 percent in the September-December 1998 quarter.

Table A. 3-month percent changes in Employment Cost Index, seasonally adjusted

Compensation Component	June 1997	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	Mar. 1998	June 1998	Sep. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999
Civilian workers								
Compensation costs	0.8	0.8	1.0	0.7	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.4
Wages and salaries	0.9	0.8	1.1	0.9	0.9	1.1	0.7	0.5
Benefit costs	0.5	0.4	0.9	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.3
Private industry								
Compensation costs	0.8	0.8	1.1	0.7	0.9	1.0	0.7	0.4
Wages and salaries	0.9	0.9	1.1	0.9	1.0	1.2	0.7	0.4
Benefit costs	0.6	0.4	1.0	0.4	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.2
State and local government								
Compensation costs	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6
Wages and salaries	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.6
Benefit costs	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.6	0.6

NOTE

This release incorporates new seasonal adjustment factors. See page 3 for details.

The 3-month increase in compensation costs for private industry workers was 0.4 percent during the December 1998-March 1999 period. The gain in wages and salaries was 0.4 percent in March; in December, it was 0.7 percent. Benefit costs showed a 3-month rise of 0.2 percent during the March quarter and 0.7 percent during the December period. (See tables A and 1.)

Compensation costs for state and local government workers increased 0.6 percent during the December 1998-March 1999 period, following a gain of 0.7 percent last quarter. Wages and salaries rose 0.6 percent in March; in December 1998, the increase was 0.8 percent. Benefit costs increased 0.6 percent in the March quarter, the same increase as reported in the December quarter. (See tables A and 1.)

Over-the-year changes, not seasonally adjusted

Compensation costs for civilian workers (not seasonally adjusted) increased 3.0 percent for the year ended March 1999. This compares with over-the-year increases of 3.3 percent in March 1998 and 2.9 percent in March 1997. Compensation costs in private industry also rose 3.0 percent in March 1999, following increases of 3.5 percent in March 1998 and 3.0 percent in March 1997. Compensation costs for state and local government increased 2.9 percent for the year ended March 1999. The over-the-year increase in both March 1998 and March 1997 was 2.5 percent. (See tables B, 2, and 3.)

Nonfarm private industry

In private industry, wages and salaries rose 3.3 percent for the year ended March 1999. Wages and salaries increased 4.0 percent in March 1998. (See tables B and 6.) Benefit costs for private industry workers increased 2.2 percent for the year ended in March 1999, compared with 2.3 percent in March 1998. (See chart A and tables B and 8.)

In private industry, over-the-year compensation cost increases were 3.1 percent for white-collar occupations, 2.9 percent for blue-collar occupations, and 3.1 percent for service occupations. Among the occupational groups, rises in compensation costs ranged from 1.8 percent for transportation and material moving occupations to 3.2 percent for sales, administrative support, including clerical, and precision production, craft, and repair occupations. (See table 3.)

Table B. 12-month percent changes in Employment Cost Index, not seasonally adjusted

Compensation Component	Mar. 1994	Mar. 1995	Mar. 1996	Mar. 1997	Mar. 1998	Mar. 1999
Civilian workers						
Compensation costs	3.2	2.9	2.8	2.9	3.3	3.0
Wages and salaries	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.3	3.7	3.3
Benefit costs	4.1	2.8	1.8	2.0	2.2	2.3
Private industry						
Compensation costs	3.3	2.9	2.7	3.0	3.5	3.0
Wages and salaries	2.9	2.9	3.2	3.4	4.0	3.3
Benefit costs	4.4	2.9	1.6	2.0	2.3	2.2
State and local government						
Compensation costs	2.8	3.1	2.8	2.5	2.5	2.9
Wages and salaries	2.7	3.2	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.9
Benefit costs	3.0	2.5	2.7	2.0	1.7	2.8

For the year ended March 1999, compensation costs rose 2.8 percent in goods-producing industries and 3.1 percent in service-producing industries. For the previous year ended in March 1998, compensation costs rose 2.8 percent in goods-producing industries and 3.9 percent in service-producing industries. Among industry divisions, over-the-year increases ranged from 2.6 percent in manufacturing to 3.8 percent in construction. (See table 3.)

The 3.0 percent over-the year increase in compensation costs for union workers in private industry was the same as the 3.0 percent increase for nonunion workers. In service-producing industries, union compensation increased 2.9 percent, and nonunion compensation increased 3.2 percent. In contrast, in goods-producing industries, the increase for union workers was 3.1 percent, and the increase for nonunion workers was 2.8 percent. Compensation in blue-collar occupations increased 2.9 percent for union workers and 2.8 percent for nonunion workers. (See table 4.)

State and local government

In state and local government, the March 1999 over-the-year increase in wages and salaries was 2.9 percent, similar to the 2.8 percent increase in March 1998. Benefit costs for March 1999 increased 2.8 percent. In March 1998, the increase was 1.7 percent. (See tables 5 and 8.)

NOTES:

This release includes annual revisions in seasonally adjusted Employment Cost Index (ECI) data for total compensation, wages and salaries, and benefit costs. Seasonally adjusted data for 1994-1998 were revised to reflect updated seasonal factors. The new seasonal factors for 1999, along with revised seasonally adjusted indexes and 3-month percent changes for the past 5 years, are available on the Internet site (<http://stats.gov/ecthome.htm>) or upon request.

The ECI for June 1999 is scheduled to be released Thursday, July 29, 1999, at 8:30 a.m. (EDT).

The Employer Costs for Employee Compensation (ECEC) for March 1999 is scheduled to be released Thursday, June 24, 1999, at 10:00 a.m. (EDT).

ECI data are available on the ECI home page (<http://stats.bls.gov/ecthome.htm>). To access data using Anonymous FTP, use the Internet address (<ftp://ftp.bls.gov>).

For technical assistance in using the BLS Internet site, send e-mail to (labstat.helpdesk@bls.gov). For ECI data requests, send e-mail to (ocltinfo@bls.gov).

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Employment Cost Index

Chart A. Changes in wages and salaries and benefit costs, private industry

Wages & salaries — Benefits —

12-month percent change

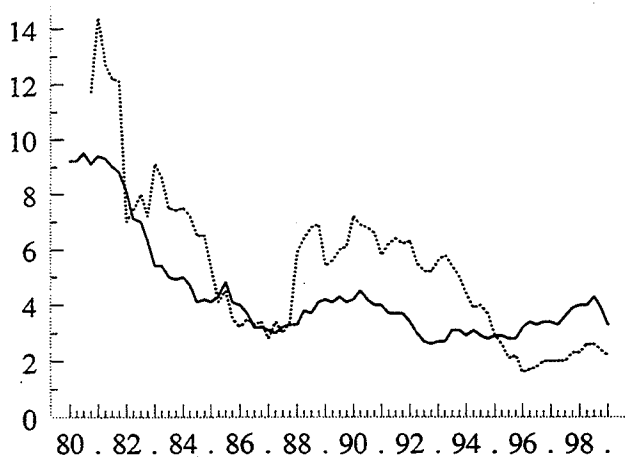


Chart B. Changes in compensation, seasonally adjusted and not seasonally adjusted, private industry

Seasonally adjusted — Not seasonally adjusted —

3-month percent change

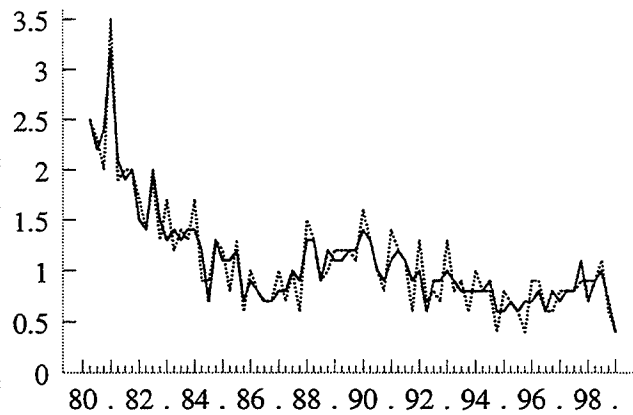


Chart C. Changes in benefits by occupational category, private industry

White-collar — Blue-collar —

12-month percent change



Chart D. Changes in benefits by industry sector, private industry

Goods-producing — Service-producing —

12-month percent change

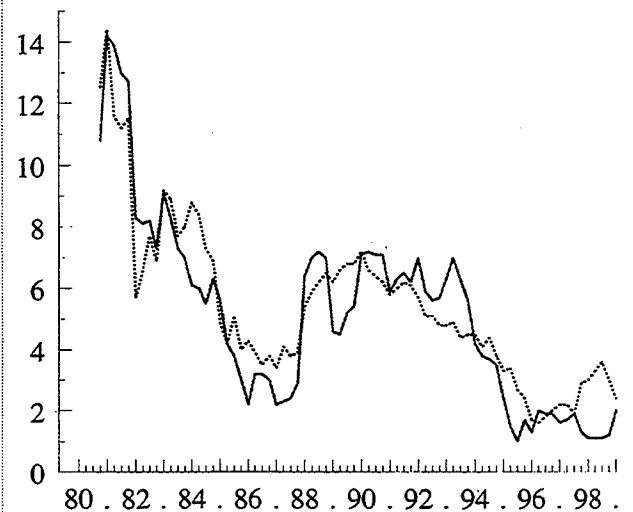


Table 1. Employment Cost Index for total compensation¹, wages and salaries, and benefit costs by industry and occupational group

(Seasonally adjusted data)

Industry and occupational group	Indexes (June 1989=100)		Percent changes for 3-months ended—							
	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999	June 1997	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	Mar. 1998	June 1998	Sep. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999
TOTAL COMPENSATION										
Civilian workers	139.7	140.2	0.8	0.8	1.0	0.7	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.4
State and local government	139.5	140.4	.5	.5	.7	.7	.7	.7	.7	.6
Private industry	139.7	140.2	.8	.8	1.1	.7	.9	1.0	.7	.4
Industry										
Goods producing ²	137.9	138.9	.9	.7	.4	.7	.8	.7	.5	.7
Construction ³	134.6	135.9	.8	.6	.5	.7	1.2	.4	1.2	1.0
Manufacturing	138.9	139.8	.8	.7	.6	.7	.6	.7	.6	.6
Durables	139.2	140.0	.8	.6	.6	.7	.6	.7	.6	.6
Nondurables	138.4	139.5	1.0	.7	.7	.8	.6	.8	.5	.8
Service producing ⁴	140.6	140.7	.8	.8	1.4	.7	.9	1.2	.8	.1
Transportation and public utilities ⁵	139.5	139.5	.6	.8	1.1	.9	1.2	.9	.7	.0
Wholesale trade ³	143.1	142.6	.6	.7	.6	1.6	.6	1.7	1.6	-3
Retail trade	135.9	136.9	.8	.9	.9	.9	.8	1.0	.2	.7
Finance, insurance, and real estate ^{3,6}	142.5	141.5	.6	.9	3.1	1.6	1.2	1.9	1.1	-7
Services	142.8	143.5	.9	.8	1.2	.5	.8	.9	.8	.5
Nonmanufacturing	139.9	140.2	.8	.8	1.4	.8	.9	1.1	.9	.2
Occupational group										
White collar	142.3	142.3	.8	.7	1.4	.7	1.0	1.1	.9	.0
Blue collar	136.1	137.0	.8	.7	.7	.5	.8	.7	.7	.7
Service	137.6	139.1	.9	1.5	.8	.9	.7	.8	.5	1.1
WAGES AND SALARIES										
Civilian workers	137.6	138.3	.9	.8	1.1	.9	.9	1.1	.7	.5
State and local government	138.2	139.0	.6	.8	.7	.7	.7	.7	.8	.6
Private industry	137.5	138.1	.9	.9	1.1	.9	1.0	1.2	.7	.4
Industry										
Goods producing ^{2,6}	135.2	136.3	1.1	.8	.5	1.1	.9	.8	.7	.8
Construction ³	129.5	131.0	.9	.8	.6	1.0	1.3	.2	1.0	1.2
Manufacturing ⁶	136.8	137.9	.9	.8	.7	1.1	.7	1.0	.6	.8
Durables ⁶	136.9	137.9	.9	.8	.5	1.1	.8	1.0	.7	.7
Nondurables	137.0	137.8	1.0	.8	1.0	.9	.6	1.0	.7	.6
Service producing ⁴	138.5	138.9	.9	1.0	1.4	.9	.9	1.4	.7	.3
Transportation and public utilities ⁵	135.1	135.2	.7	.9	.9	.5	.8	1.0	.6	.1
Wholesale trade ³	141.4	140.8	.3	.8	.5	1.9	.4	1.8	1.5	-4
Retail trade	135.1	136.3	.9	.9	1.0	.8	.9	1.3	.1	.9
Finance, insurance, and real estate ^{3,6}	139.8	137.2	.6	.9	3.3	1.5	1.7	2.4	1.2	-1.9
Services	140.9	142.1	1.1	1.1	1.3	.7	.9	1.1	.7	.9
Nonmanufacturing	137.6	137.9	.9	.9	1.4	.8	1.0	1.2	1.0	.2

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Employment Cost Index for total compensation¹, wages and salaries, and benefit costs by industry and occupational group — Continued

(Seasonally adjusted data)

Industry and occupational group	Indexes (June 1989=100)		Percent changes for 3-months ended—							
	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999	June 1997	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	Mar. 1998	June 1998	Sep. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999
WAGES AND SALARIES—Continued										
Occupational group										
White collar	140.1	140.2	0.8	1.0	1.4	0.9	1.0	1.4	0.9	0.1
Blue collar ⁶	133.2	134.3	1.0	.8	.6	.9	.8	.8	.6	.8
Service	135.1	136.7	.9	1.6	.9	.8	.8	.8	.6	1.2
BENEFIT COSTS										
Civilian workers	144.6	145.0	.5	.4	.9	.4	.7	.7	.6	.3
State and local government	142.7	143.5	.2	.1	.5	.7	.7	.9	.6	.6
Private industry	145.1	145.4	.6	.4	1.0	.4	.7	.6	.7	.2
Industry										
Goods producing ²	143.4	144.4	.6	.5	.2	-.1	.5	.4	.3	.7
Manufacturing	142.8	143.6	.7	.4	.3	-.1	.4	.3	.1	.6
Service producing ⁴	146.1	145.9	.6	.4	1.5	.5	.8	.8	.9	-.1
Nonmanufacturing	146.1	146.2	.4	.5	1.2	.6	.8	.8	.8	.1
Occupational group										
White collar	147.7	147.7	.6	.4	1.3	.5	.7	.8	.8	.0
Blue collar	141.6	142.5	.4	.6	.2	.3	.6	.4	.5	.6
Service	144.9	146.3	.9	1.2	.6	.8	.3	.6	.3	1.0

¹ Includes wages, salaries, and employer costs for employee benefits.² Includes mining, construction, and manufacturing.³ Average standard errors (SE) for the unadjusted series upon which this series is based exceeded 0.3 percent for 3-month changes and 0.6 percent for 12-month changes for the five years ending December 1996. To assist users in ascertaining the reliability of the series, SEs for estimates in this news release (excluding seasonally adjusted series) will be available on theInternet site (<http://stats.bls.gov/ecthome.htm>). All series will continue to be published until further notice.⁴ Includes transportation, communication, and public utilities; wholesale and retail trade; finance, insurance, and real estate; and service industries.⁵ Estimates for transportation and public utilities reflect the changes in SIC coding. See Explanatory Notes for further information.⁶ No identifiable seasonality was found for this series.

Table 2. Employment Cost Index for total compensation¹ for civilian and State and local government workers by industry and occupational group

(Not seasonally adjusted data)

Industry and occupational group	Indexes (June 1989=100)			Percent changes for—					
	Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999	3 months ended—			12 months ended—		
				Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999	Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999
Civilian workers	136.3	139.8	140.4	0.8	0.6	0.4	3.3	3.4	3.0
Excluding sales occupations	136.4	139.5	140.5	.8	.5	.7	3.3	3.1	3.0
Industry									
Goods producing ²	135.1	137.9	139.0	.7	.5	.8	2.7	2.8	2.9
Manufacturing	136.4	138.9	139.9	.8	.5	.7	2.9	2.7	2.6
Service producing ³	136.8	140.4	140.9	1.0	.6	.4	3.6	3.6	3.0
Services	138.3	141.7	142.3	.5	.6	.4	3.1	3.0	2.9
Health services	138.0	139.1	140.5	.1	.0	1.0	2.1	.9	1.8
Hospitals	137.1	140.2	141.3	.3	.6	.8	2.2	2.6	3.1
Educational services	137.5	141.0	141.3	.4	.6	.2	2.6	2.9	2.8
Public administration ⁴	136.4	139.9	140.8	1.0	.7	.6	2.6	3.6	3.2
Nonmanufacturing	136.2	139.9	140.5	.8	.6	.4	3.4	3.6	3.2
Occupational group									
White collar	137.7	141.4	141.9	.9	.6	.4	3.5	3.6	3.1
Excluding sales	138.1	141.2	142.2	.9	.4	.7	3.4	3.1	3.0
Professional specialty and technical	137.5	141.0	141.3	.6	.7	.2	2.8	3.1	2.8
Executive, administrative, and managerial ...	139.1	141.8	143.5	1.3	.1	1.2	4.4	3.3	3.2
Administrative support, including clerical	138.0	141.3	142.5	.8	.6	.8	3.3	3.2	3.3
Blue collar	133.2	136.1	137.1	.6	.6	.7	2.6	2.8	2.9
Service	136.9	140.0	141.3	1.0	.4	.9	3.7	3.2	3.2
State and local government	136.5	139.8	140.5	.6	.6	.5	2.5	3.0	2.9
Industry									
Services	136.5	139.7	140.0	.4	.5	.2	2.5	2.7	2.6
Excluding schools ^{5,6}	136.1	138.8	139.6	.6	.1	.6	2.7	2.6	2.6
Health services	137.9	140.7	141.2	.5	.3	.4	2.5	2.6	2.4
Hospitals	138.4	141.2	141.7	.6	.4	.4	2.7	2.6	2.4
Educational services	136.3	139.6	139.9	.3	.6	.2	2.4	2.7	2.6
Schools	136.6	139.9	140.2	.3	.6	.2	2.4	2.7	2.6
Elementary and secondary	136.1	139.3	139.6	.2	.4	.2	2.3	2.6	2.6
Colleges and universities	137.9	141.5	141.7	.5	1.0	.1	2.7	3.1	2.8
Public administration ⁴	136.4	139.9	140.8	1.0	.7	.6	2.6	3.6	3.2
Occupational group									
White collar	136.1	139.3	139.8	.4	.7	.4	2.4	2.8	2.7
Professional specialty and technical	135.6	138.5	138.8	.4	.6	.2	2.3	2.5	2.4
Executive, administrative, and managerial ...	137.5	141.6	142.6	.8	.9	.7	2.5	3.8	3.7
Administrative support, including clerical	136.9	140.3	141.4	.6	.6	.8	2.7	3.1	3.3
Blue collar	135.0	137.8	138.8	.6	.7	.7	2.2	2.7	2.8
Service	139.4	143.4	144.3	1.2	.3	.6	2.8	4.1	3.5

¹ Includes wages, salaries, and employer costs for employee benefits.² Includes mining, construction, and manufacturing.³ Includes transportation, communication, and public utilities; wholesale and retail trade; finance, insurance, and real estate; service industries; and public administration.⁴ Includes executive, legislative, judicial, administrative, and regulatory activities of State and local governments, SIC's 91 through 96.⁵ Average standard errors (SE) for the series exceed 0.3 percent for 3-month changes and 0.6 percent for 12-month changes for the five years ending December 1996. To assist users in ascertaining the reliability of the series, SEs for estimates in this news release (excluding seasonally adjusted series) will be available on the Internet site (<http://stats.bls.gov/ecthome.htm>). All series will continue to be published until further notice.⁶ Formerly called hospitals and other services.

Table 3. Employment Cost Index for total compensation¹ for private industry workers, by industry and occupational group

(Not seasonally adjusted data)

Industry and occupational group	Indexes (June 1989=100)			Percent changes for—					
	Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999	3 months ended—			12 months ended—		
				Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999	Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999
Private industry workers	136.3	139.8	140.4	0.9	0.6	0.4	3.5	3.5	3.0
Excluding sales occupations	136.4	139.4	140.5	.9	.4	.8	3.4	3.1	3.0
Industry									
Goods producing²	135.1	137.8	138.9	.7	.5	.8	2.8	2.8	2.8
Excluding sales	134.5	137.2	138.3	.7	.5	.8	2.6	2.7	2.8
White collar	137.7	140.2	141.7	1.1	.4	1.1	3.1	2.9	2.9
Excluding sales	136.3	138.8	140.4	1.0	.4	1.2	2.8	2.8	3.0
Blue collar	133.5	136.3	137.1	.5	.6	.6	2.5	2.6	2.7
Construction ³	130.6	134.3	135.6	.7	.7	1.0	2.7	3.5	3.8
Manufacturing	136.4	138.9	139.9	.8	.5	.7	2.9	2.7	2.6
White collar	138.2	140.5	141.8	1.1	.3	.9	3.2	2.8	2.6
Excluding sales	136.5	138.7	140.1	.9	.3	1.0	2.8	2.5	2.6
Blue collar	135.0	137.7	138.5	.5	.7	.6	2.5	2.5	2.6
Durables	136.5	139.2	139.9	.6	.5	.5	2.6	2.6	2.5
Aircraft manufacturing (SIC 3721)	137.2	(4)	(4)	.2	(4)	(4)	-.1	(4)	(4)
White collar	134.7	(4)	(4)	.3	(4)	(4)	.9	(4)	(4)
Blue collar	139.6	(4)	(4)	.0	(4)	(4)	-1.9	(4)	(4)
Nondurables	135.9	138.2	139.6	1.0	.4	1.0	3.2	2.8	2.7
Service producing ⁵	136.7	140.5	140.9	1.0	.6	.3	3.9	3.8	3.1
Excluding sales	137.4	140.6	141.7	1.0	.4	.8	3.9	3.3	3.1
White collar	138.0	142.2	142.3	1.0	.7	.1	4.0	4.1	3.1
Excluding sales	139.5	142.8	143.8	1.0	.4	.7	4.1	3.4	3.1
Blue collar	132.1	134.8	136.2	.9	.4	1.0	3.0	3.0	3.1
Service	135.0	137.8	139.3	.8	.6	1.1	4.2	2.9	3.2
Transportation and public utilities ⁶	135.8	139.3	139.7	1.2	.6	.3	3.4	3.8	2.9
Transportation ^{3,6}	134.0	137.3	136.8	.4	.4	-.4	2.6	2.9	2.1
Public utilities	137.9	141.9	143.4	2.1	.9	1.1	4.5	5.0	4.0
Communications	136.6	141.7	143.3	1.9	.9	1.1	4.9	5.7	4.9
Electric, gas, and sanitary services	139.6	142.1	143.4	2.3	.8	.9	4.0	4.2	2.7
Wholesale and retail trade	134.7	138.2	138.9	1.4	.4	.5	3.5	4.0	3.1
Excluding sales	135.5	138.8	139.9	1.1	.5	.8	3.9	3.6	3.2
Wholesale trade ³	137.7	142.8	142.7	1.9	1.4	-.1	3.6	5.7	3.6
Excluding sales	137.0	141.2	142.4	1.2	.9	.8	3.3	4.3	3.9
Retail trade	133.1	135.6	136.8	1.1	-.2	.9	3.6	3.0	2.8
General merchandise stores ³	131.2	134.0	135.0	.9	.6	.7	3.8	3.1	2.9
Food stores ³	131.3	132.7	134.3	1.5	-.7	1.2	2.4	2.6	2.3
Finance, insurance, and real estate ³	136.7	142.5	141.5	1.6	1.1	-.7	6.3	5.9	3.5
Excluding sales	140.2	143.3	145.6	1.9	.1	1.6	6.6	4.1	3.9
Banking, savings and loan, and other credit agencies ³	143.3	146.7	148.8	1.9	-1.1	1.4	9.7	4.3	3.8
Insurance ³	137.4	141.7	141.7	1.9	-.1	.0	4.2	5.1	3.1
Excluding sales	140.0	142.5	144.5	1.0	.6	1.4	2.9	2.8	3.2
Services	139.3	142.7	143.5	.6	.6	.6	3.5	3.0	3.0
Business services ³	139.5	145.9	147.5	.6	1.7	1.1	4.7	5.3	5.7
Health services	138.2	139.0	140.5	.1	.0	1.1	2.0	.7	1.7
Hospitals	136.7	139.9	141.2	.1	.6	.9	2.0	2.5	3.3
Nursing homes	—	—	—	.8	.6	1.3	2.7	3.2	3.6
Educational services	143.4	147.7	148.3	.6	.5	.4	3.5	3.6	3.4
Colleges and universities	144.3	148.5	149.2	.4	.5	.5	3.4	3.3	3.4

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 3. Employment Cost Index for total compensation¹ for private industry workers, by industry and occupational group — Continued

(Not seasonally adjusted data)

Industry and occupational group	Indexes (June 1989=100)			Percent changes for—					
	Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999	3 months ended—			12 months ended—		
				Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999	Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999
Industry—Continued									
Nonmanufacturing industries	136.0	139.7	140.3	1.0	0.6	0.4	3.7	3.7	3.2
White collar	137.9	142.0	142.3	1.0	.6	.2	3.9	4.0	3.2
Excluding sales	139.3	142.7	143.7	1.0	.5	.7	4.0	3.5	3.2
Blue collar	131.0	134.0	135.2	.7	.4	.9	2.7	3.0	3.2
Service	134.9	137.7	139.2	.8	.6	1.1	4.3	2.9	3.2
Occupational group									
White collar	138.1	142.0	142.4	1.0	.6	.3	3.8	3.9	3.1
Excluding sales	138.8	141.9	143.0	1.0	.4	.8	3.8	3.3	3.0
Professional specialty and technical	138.8	142.6	142.9	.7	.7	.2	3.1	3.5	3.0
Executive, administrative, and managerial ...	139.4	141.8	143.7	1.5	-.1	1.3	4.8	3.2	3.1
Sales ³	135.3	142.6	139.6	1.3	1.6	-2.1	4.0	6.8	3.2
Administrative support, including clerical	138.2	141.4	142.6	.9	.6	.8	3.4	3.2	3.2
Blue collar	133.1	135.9	136.9	.6	.5	.7	2.7	2.7	2.9
Precision production, craft, and repair	132.9	136.1	137.2	.8	.5	.8	2.5	3.2	3.2
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	133.6	136.8	137.3	.5	.8	.4	2.8	2.9	2.8
Transportation and material moving	129.3	130.7	131.6	.3	.0	.7	2.5	1.4	1.8
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	137.0	139.2	141.0	.9	.5	1.3	3.2	2.5	2.9
Service	135.3	138.0	139.5	.9	.5	1.1	4.2	2.9	3.1
Production and nonsupervisory occupations⁷	135.3	139.0	139.3	.8	.7	.2	3.2	3.6	3.0

¹ Includes wages, salaries, and employer costs for employee benefits.

² Includes mining, construction, and manufacturing.

³ Average standard errors (SE) for the series exceed 0.3 percent for 3-month changes and 0.6 percent for 12-month changes for the five years ending December 1996. To assist users in ascertaining the reliability of the series, SEs for estimates in this news release (excluding seasonally adjusted series) will be available on the Internet site (<http://stats.bls.gov/ecthome.htm>). All series will continue to be published until further notice.

⁴ Due to an error in the data, estimates for December 1998 and March 1999 have been suppressed. Indexes and percent changes reflecting the

corrected data will be available May 18, 1999.

⁵ Includes transportation, communication, and public utilities; wholesale and retail trade; finance, insurance, and real estate; and service industries.

⁶ Estimates for transportation and public utilities reflect the changes in SIC coding. See Explanatory Notes for further information.

⁷ This series has the same industry and occupational coverage as the Hourly Earnings Index, which was discontinued in January 1989.

NOTE: Dashes indicate data not available.

Table 4. Employment Cost Index for total compensation¹ for private industry workers, by bargaining status, region, and area

(Not seasonally adjusted data)

Bargaining status, region, and area	Indexes (June 1989=100)			Percent changes for—					
	Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999	3 months ended—			12 months ended—		
				Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999	Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999
Bargaining status									
Union	134.0	137.5	138.0	0.4	0.5	0.4	2.3	3.0	3.0
Blue-collar occupations	131.8	135.3	135.6	.2	.5	.2	2.2	2.8	2.9
Goods-producing industries ²	132.7	136.5	136.8	.2	.7	.2	2.1	3.0	3.1
Service-producing industries ³	135.3	138.5	139.2	.6	.4	.5	2.6	3.0	2.9
Manufacturing	133.6	136.9	137.0	.2	.7	.1	2.1	2.7	2.5
Blue-collar occupations	133.1	136.4	136.5	.1	.7	.1	2.0	2.6	2.6
Nonmanufacturing	133.9	137.4	138.1	.5	.4	.5	2.5	3.2	3.1
Nonunion	136.7	140.1	140.8	1.0	.6	.5	3.7	3.5	3.0
Blue-collar occupations	133.8	136.3	137.6	.9	.6	1.0	3.0	2.8	2.8
Goods-producing industries ²	135.9	138.3	139.7	.9	.4	1.0	3.0	2.7	2.8
Service-producing industries ³	136.7	140.6	141.1	1.0	.6	.4	4.0	3.9	3.2
Manufacturing	137.2	139.4	140.7	1.0	.4	.9	3.1	2.6	2.6
Blue-collar occupations	136.0	138.3	139.5	.9	.7	.9	2.9	2.6	2.6
Nonmanufacturing	136.3	140.0	140.6	1.0	.6	.4	4.0	3.8	3.2
Region⁴									
Northeast	136.0	139.5	140.5	.7	.6	.7	2.9	3.3	3.3
South	135.5	138.1	139.1	.7	.4	.7	3.6	2.6	2.7
Midwest	138.3	141.4	141.7	1.0	.4	.2	3.8	3.3	2.5
West	135.2	140.0	140.3	1.3	1.1	.2	3.8	4.9	3.8
Area									
Metropolitan	136.4	139.8	140.4	1.0	.5	.4	3.6	3.5	2.9
Other	135.9	139.4	140.5	.4	.9	.8	3.4	3.0	3.4

¹ Includes wages, salaries, and employer costs for employee benefits.² Includes mining, construction, and manufacturing.³ Includes transportation, communication, and public utilities; wholesale and retail trade; finance, insurance, and real estate; and service industries.⁴ The regional coverage is as follows: Northeast: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont; South: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia,

and West Virginia; Midwest: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin; and West: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

NOTE: The indexes for these series are not strictly comparable to those for the aggregate, occupation, and industry series.

Table 5. Employment Cost Index for wages and salaries for civilian and State and local government workers, by industry and occupational group

(Not seasonally adjusted data)

Industry and occupational group	Indexes (June 1989=100)			Percent changes for—					
	Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999	3 months ended—			12 months ended—		
				Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999	Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999
Civilian workers	134.0	137.7	138.4	0.9	0.7	0.5	3.7	3.7	3.3
Excluding sales occupations	134.0	137.3	138.4	.9	.5	.8	3.7	3.4	3.3
Industry									
Goods producing ¹	132.0	135.2	136.3	1.1	.6	.8	3.4	3.5	3.3
Manufacturing	133.7	136.8	137.9	1.1	.6	.8	3.6	3.5	3.1
Service producing ²	134.8	138.7	139.2	.9	.7	.4	3.9	3.8	3.3
Services	136.9	140.5	141.5	.7	.6	.7	3.7	3.3	3.4
Health services	136.2	137.6	138.8	.6	.0	.9	2.9	1.6	1.9
Hospitals	134.2	137.1	138.1	.4	.5	.7	2.4	2.6	2.9
Educational services	136.3	140.0	140.2	.3	.6	.1	2.9	3.0	2.9
Public administration ³	132.7	135.9	136.9	1.0	.8	.7	2.9	3.4	3.2
Nonmanufacturing	134.0	137.8	138.4	.9	.6	.4	3.8	3.8	3.3
Occupational group									
White collar	135.6	139.7	140.1	1.0	.6	.3	3.8	4.0	3.3
Excluding sales	136.1	139.5	140.5	1.0	.5	.7	3.9	3.5	3.2
Professional specialty and technical	135.8	139.4	140.1	.6	.6	.5	3.3	3.3	3.2
Executive, administrative, and managerial ...	137.4	140.3	141.6	1.3	-.1	.9	4.9	3.5	3.1
Administrative support, including clerical	135.0	138.6	140.0	1.0	.8	1.0	3.5	3.7	3.7
Blue collar	130.4	133.3	134.5	.9	.5	.9	3.3	3.1	3.1
Service	133.7	137.0	138.3	.8	.7	.9	4.0	3.3	3.4
State and local government	135.1	138.5	139.0	.5	.7	.4	2.8	3.1	2.9
Industry									
Services	135.7	139.2	139.5	.3	.6	.2	2.7	2.9	2.8
Excluding schools ^{4,5}	135.4	138.2	139.0	.7	.3	.6	3.2	2.8	2.7
Health services	136.3	139.2	139.7	.7	.4	.4	3.2	2.9	2.5
Hospitals	136.3	139.1	139.7	.8	.4	.4	3.3	2.9	2.5
Educational services	135.7	139.3	139.5	.3	.7	.1	2.7	3.0	2.8
Schools	135.8	139.5	139.6	.2	.7	.1	2.7	3.0	2.8
Elementary and secondary	136.0	139.3	139.5	.2	.4	.1	2.7	2.7	2.6
Colleges and universities	135.2	139.6	139.6	.4	1.4	.0	2.8	3.7	3.3
Public administration ³	132.7	135.9	136.9	1.0	.8	.7	2.9	3.4	3.2
Occupational group									
White collar	135.0	138.5	138.9	.4	.7	.3	2.7	3.0	2.9
Professional specialty and technical	135.5	138.7	138.9	.3	.6	.1	2.7	2.7	2.5
Executive, administrative, and managerial ...	135.1	139.3	140.1	.7	.9	.6	2.9	3.9	3.7
Administrative support, including clerical	133.0	136.5	137.4	.5	.8	.7	2.9	3.2	3.3
Blue collar	133.1	136.0	136.9	.6	.7	.7	2.7	2.8	2.9
Service	136.5	140.0	141.1	1.0	.6	.8	3.1	3.6	3.4

¹ Includes mining, construction, and manufacturing.² Includes transportation, communication, and public utilities; wholesale and retail trade; finance, insurance, and real estate; service industries; and public administration.³ Includes executive, legislative, judicial, administrative, and regulatory activities of State and local governments, SIC's 91 through 96.⁴ Average standard errors (SE) for the series exceed 0.3 percent for3-month changes and 0.6 percent for 12-month changes for the five years ending December 1996. To assist users in ascertaining the reliability of the series, SEs for estimates in this news release (excluding seasonally adjusted series) will be available on the Internet site (<http://stats.bls.gov/ecthome.htm>). All series will continue to be published until further notice.⁵ Formerly called hospitals and other services.

Table 6. Employment Cost Index for wages and salaries for private industry workers by industry and occupational group

(Not seasonally adjusted data)

Industry and occupational group	Indexes (June 1989=100)			Percent changes for—					
	Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999	3 months ended—			12 months ended—		
				Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999	Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999
Private industry workers	133.7	137.4	138.1	1.1	0.6	0.5	4.0	3.9	3.3
Excluding sales occupations	133.7	136.9	138.2	1.0	.4	.9	4.0	3.4	3.4
Industry									
Goods producing ¹	132.0	135.2	136.3	1.1	.7	.8	3.5	3.5	3.3
Excluding sales	131.3	134.4	135.5	1.0	.6	.8	3.4	3.4	3.2
White collar	135.0	138.2	139.4	1.6	.6	.9	3.8	4.0	3.3
Excluding sales	133.3	136.4	137.8	1.3	.5	1.0	3.4	3.6	3.4
Blue collar	130.1	133.3	134.3	.7	.8	.8	3.3	3.2	3.2
Construction ²	126.0	129.3	130.7	.9	.6	1.1	3.3	3.5	3.7
Manufacturing	133.7	136.8	137.9	1.1	.6	.8	3.6	3.5	3.1
White collar	135.6	139.0	140.1	1.5	.5	.8	3.8	4.0	3.3
Excluding sales	133.8	137.1	138.3	1.2	.6	.9	3.5	3.7	3.4
Blue collar	132.3	135.3	136.3	.8	.7	.7	3.4	3.1	3.0
Durables	133.4	136.9	137.9	1.1	.7	.7	3.4	3.8	3.4
Aircraft manufacturing (SIC 3721)	135.1	(3)	(3)	.8	(3)	(3)	2.3	(3)	(3)
White collar	131.2	(3)	(3)	1.1	(3)	(3)	2.7	(3)	(3)
Blue collar	140.1	(3)	(3)	.4	(3)	(3)	1.7	(3)	(3)
Nondurables	134.2	136.8	138.0	1.2	.6	.9	3.8	3.2	2.8
Service producing ⁴	134.4	138.4	138.9	1.0	.6	.4	4.2	4.0	3.3
Excluding sales	135.2	138.5	139.8	1.0	.4	.9	4.2	3.4	3.4
White collar	135.7	140.1	140.3	1.0	.6	.1	4.3	4.3	3.4
Excluding sales	137.3	140.7	142.0	1.0	.4	.9	4.4	3.5	3.4
Blue collar	130.2	132.9	134.4	1.0	.4	1.1	3.3	3.1	3.2
Service	132.1	135.2	136.7	.8	.7	1.1	4.4	3.2	3.5
Transportation and public utilities ⁵	132.1	135.1	135.4	.6	.6	.2	3.0	2.9	2.5
Transportation ^{2,5}	130.1	132.9	132.3	.5	.4	-.5	2.8	2.6	1.7
Public utilities	134.5	137.8	139.2	.7	1.0	1.0	3.4	3.2	3.5
Communications	134.4	138.0	139.4	.3	1.0	1.0	3.5	3.0	3.7
Electric, gas, and sanitary services	134.7	137.4	138.9	1.4	.8	1.1	3.3	3.4	3.1
Wholesale and retail trade	133.3	137.0	137.7	1.3	.3	.5	3.7	4.1	3.3
Excluding sales	134.7	138.2	139.5	1.1	.4	.9	4.2	3.8	3.6
Wholesale trade ²	136.2	141.3	140.7	1.9	1.4	-.4	3.7	5.8	3.3
Excluding sales	136.5	140.8	141.9	1.1	.9	.8	3.6	4.3	4.0
Retail trade	131.9	134.8	136.2	1.0	-.3	1.0	3.8	3.2	3.3
General merchandise stores ²	129.4	133.0	133.7	.8	.6	.5	3.5	3.6	3.3
Food stores ²	129.0	130.5	131.8	1.6	-.9	1.0	3.4	2.8	2.2
Finance, insurance, and real estate ²	132.6	139.8	137.2	1.5	1.2	-1.9	6.5	7.0	3.5
Excluding sales	135.9	139.6	141.0	1.7	-.1	1.0	6.8	4.5	3.8
Banking, savings and loan, and other credit agencies ²	140.9	144.4	146.1	1.9	-1.8	1.2	11.9	4.4	3.7
Insurance ²	133.1	138.5	137.4	2.2	-.1	-.8	4.1	6.4	3.2
Excluding sales	134.7	137.9	139.1	.7	1.0	.9	2.4	3.1	3.3
Services	137.2	140.8	142.2	.7	.6	1.0	4.1	3.4	3.6
Business services ²	137.6	144.1	145.4	.2	1.6	.9	4.7	5.0	5.7
Health services	136.2	137.4	138.7	.6	-.1	.9	2.8	1.5	1.8
Hospitals	133.6	136.5	137.6	.3	.5	.8	2.2	2.5	3.0
Nursing homes	—	—	—	1.3	.5	1.4	3.3	3.7	3.8
Educational services	139.1	143.5	143.9	.5	.5	.3	3.4	3.7	3.5
Colleges and universities	139.1	143.6	144.1	.3	.6	.3	3.3	3.5	3.6

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 6. Employment Cost Index for wages and salaries for private industry workers by industry and occupational group — Continued

(Not seasonally adjusted data)

Industry and occupational group	Indexes (June 1989=100)			Percent changes for—					
	Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999	3 months ended—			12 months ended—		
				Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999	Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999
Industry—Continued									
Nonmanufacturing industries	133.4	137.4	137.9	1.0	0.7	0.4	4.1	4.0	3.4
White collar	135.5	139.8	140.1	1.0	.6	.2	4.3	4.3	3.4
Excluding sales	136.9	140.3	141.6	1.0	.4	.9	4.3	3.5	3.4
Blue collar	128.2	131.1	132.4	.9	.5	1.0	3.3	3.1	3.3
Service	132.0	135.1	136.5	.8	.7	1.0	4.4	3.2	3.4
Occupational group									
White collar	135.7	139.9	140.3	1.1	.6	.3	4.2	4.2	3.4
Excluding sales	136.3	139.7	141.0	1.1	.4	.9	4.2	3.6	3.4
Professional specialty and technical	135.9	139.7	140.7	.8	.7	.7	3.7	3.6	3.5
Executive, administrative, and managerial ...	137.8	140.5	141.9	1.5	-.3	1.0	5.2	3.5	3.0
Sales ²	133.1	141.3	137.3	1.3	1.8	-2.8	4.1	7.5	3.2
Administrative support, including clerical	135.3	138.9	140.4	1.0	.7	1.1	3.6	3.7	3.8
Blue collar	130.2	133.2	134.3	.9	.6	.8	3.3	3.2	3.1
Precision production, craft, and repair	129.8	133.0	134.3	.9	.5	1.0	3.2	3.3	3.5
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	131.6	134.9	135.7	.8	.8	.6	3.5	3.3	3.1
Transportation and material moving	125.9	127.8	129.1	.6	.2	1.0	2.9	2.2	2.5
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	133.2	135.8	137.3	1.1	.5	1.1	3.7	3.0	3.1
Service	132.1	135.3	136.7	.8	.7	1.0	4.3	3.2	3.5
Production and nonsupervisory occupations⁶	132.3	136.4	136.8	.8	.9	.3	3.6	4.0	3.4

¹ Includes mining, construction, and manufacturing.² Average standard errors (SE) for the series exceed 0.3 percent for 3-month changes and 0.6 percent for 12-month changes for the five years ending December 1996. To assist users in ascertaining the reliability of the series, SEs for estimates in this news release (excluding seasonally adjusted series) will be available on the Internet site (<http://stats.bls.gov/ecthome.htm>). All series will continue to be published until further notice.³ Due to an error in the data, estimates for December 1998 and March 1999 have been suppressed. Indexes and percent changes reflecting the corrected data will be available May 18, 1999.⁴ Includes transportation, communication, and public utilities; wholesale and retail trade; finance, insurance, and real estate; and service industries.⁵ Estimates for transportation and public utilities reflect the changes in SIC coding. See Explanatory Notes for further information.⁶ This series has the same industry and occupational coverage as the Hourly Earnings Index, which was discontinued in January 1989.

NOTE: Dashes indicate data not available.

Table 7. Employment Cost Index for wages and salaries for private industry workers by bargaining status, region, and area

(Not seasonally adjusted data)

Bargaining status, region, and area	Indexes (June 1989=100)			Percent changes for—					
	Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999	3 months ended—			12 months ended—		
				Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999	Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999
Bargaining status									
Union	129.6	133.1	133.6	0.5	0.5	0.4	2.9	3.3	3.1
Blue-collar occupations	127.2	130.6	131.2	.4	.5	.5	2.9	3.1	3.1
Goods-producing industries ¹	127.9	131.7	132.3	.6	.5	.5	3.1	3.6	3.4
Service-producing industries ²	131.8	134.8	135.4	.5	.5	.4	2.8	2.7	2.7
Manufacturing	129.6	133.0	133.6	.8	.6	.5	3.2	3.4	3.1
Blue-collar occupations	129.0	132.4	133.0	.5	.8	.5	2.9	3.1	3.1
Nonmanufacturing	129.6	133.1	133.7	.4	.5	.5	2.8	3.1	3.2
Nonunion	134.5	138.3	139.0	1.1	.7	.5	4.2	4.0	3.3
Blue-collar occupations	132.0	134.8	136.2	1.1	.6	1.0	3.5	3.2	3.2
Goods-producing industries ¹	133.6	136.5	137.8	1.2	.6	1.0	3.6	3.4	3.1
Service-producing industries ²	134.6	138.8	139.3	1.1	.7	.4	4.3	4.2	3.5
Manufacturing	135.1	138.2	139.4	1.2	.7	.9	3.7	3.5	3.2
Blue-collar occupations	134.4	137.2	138.5	1.1	.7	.9	3.5	3.2	3.1
Nonmanufacturing	134.0	138.0	138.6	1.1	.7	.4	4.3	4.1	3.4
Region³									
Northeast	132.6	136.4	137.1	.8	.7	.5	3.0	3.6	3.4
South	134.0	136.7	137.9	.8	.1	.9	4.3	2.8	2.9
Midwest	134.7	138.0	138.9	1.3	.4	.7	4.4	3.8	3.1
West	132.9	138.4	138.2	1.3	1.2	-.1	4.1	5.5	4.0
Area									
Metropolitan	133.8	137.7	138.3	1.1	.6	.4	4.0	4.1	3.4
Other	132.5	136.0	137.1	.4	1.0	.8	3.8	3.0	3.5

¹ Includes mining, construction, and manufacturing.² Includes transportation, communication, and public utilities; wholesale and retail trade; finance, insurance, and real estate; and service industries.³ The regional coverage is as follows: Northeast: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont; South: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia; Midwest: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan,

Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin; and West: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

NOTE: The indexes for these series are not strictly comparable to those for the aggregate, occupation, and industry series.

Table 8. Employment Cost Index for benefits for civilian, State and local government, and private industry workers by industry, occupational group, and bargaining status

(Not seasonally adjusted data)

Industry, occupational group, and bargaining status	Indexes (June 1989=100)			Percent changes for—					
	Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999	3 months ended—			12 months ended—		
				Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999	Mar. 1998	Dec. 1998	Mar. 1999
Civilian workers	142.0	144.7	145.3	0.6	0.5	0.4	2.2	2.6	2.3
State and local government	139.7	142.7	143.6	.8	.4	.6	1.7	3.0	2.8
Private industry	142.6	145.2	145.8	.6	.5	.4	2.3	2.4	2.2
Industry									
Goods producing ¹	141.5	143.2	144.3	.0	.1	.8	1.1	1.2	2.0
Service producing ²	142.7	145.7	146.1	.9	.6	.3	3.0	3.0	2.4
Manufacturing	141.7	142.7	143.6	.0	.1	.6	1.3	.7	1.3
Aircraft manufacturing (SIC 3721)	141.7	(3)	(3)	-9	(3)	(3)	-4.6	(3)	(3)
White collar	142.9	(3)	(3)	-1.3	(3)	(3)	-2.7	(3)	(3)
Blue collar	139.0	(3)	(3)	-4	(3)	(3)	-7.9	(3)	(3)
Nonmanufacturing	142.7	145.8	146.3	.8	.6	.3	2.7	3.0	2.5
Occupational group									
White collar	144.7	147.4	147.9	.9	.5	.3	2.8	2.8	2.2
Blue collar	139.1	141.6	142.2	.1	.4	.4	1.4	1.9	2.2
Service	143.3	144.8	146.3	.9	.1	1.0	3.6	2.0	2.1
Bargaining status									
Union	142.1	145.5	145.8	.1	.3	.2	1.4	2.5	2.6
Nonunion	142.5	144.9	145.6	.7	.5	.5	2.6	2.4	2.2

¹ Includes mining, construction, and manufacturing.

² Includes transportation, communication, and public utilities; wholesale and retail trade; finance, insurance, and real estate; and service industries.

³ Due to an error in the data, estimates for December 1998 and March 1999 have been suppressed. Indexes and percent changes reflecting the corrected data will be available May 18, 1999.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The Employment Cost Index (ECI) is a measure of the change in the cost of labor, free from the influence of employment shifts among occupations and industries. The compensation series includes changes in wages and salaries and employer costs for employee benefits. The wage and salary series and the benefit cost series provide the change for the two components of compensation.

Wages and salaries are defined as the hourly straight-time wage rate or, for workers not paid on an hourly basis, straight-time earnings divided by the corresponding hours. Straight-time wage and salary rates are total earnings before payroll deductions, excluding premium pay for overtime and for work on weekends and holidays, shift differentials, and nonproduction bonuses such as lump-sum payments provided in lieu of wage increases. Production bonuses, incentive earnings, commission payments, and cost-of-living adjustments are included in straight-time wage and salary rates.

Benefits covered by the ECI are: Paid leave--vacations, holidays, sick leave, and other leave; supplemental pay--premium pay for work in addition to the regular work schedule (such as overtime, weekends, and holidays), shift differentials, and nonproduction bonuses such as lump-sum payments provided in lieu of wage increases); insurance benefits--life, health, short-term disability, and long-term disability; retirement and savings benefits--defined benefit and defined contribution plans; legally required benefits--social security, Federal and state unemployment insurance, and workers' compensation; and other benefits--severance pay and supplemental unemployment plans.

The ECI provides data for the civilian economy, which includes the total private nonfarm economy and the public sector--excluding households and the Federal government. The private industry series and the state and local government series provide data for the two sectors separately.

Data for this quarter were collected from a probability sample of approximately 17,200 occupational observations within about 4,200 sample establishments in private industry and approximately 4,100 occupations within about 800 sample establishments in state and local governments. Data are collected for the pay period including the 12th day of the survey months of March, June, September, and December.

The sampled establishments are classified by industry categories based on the 1987 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC), as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. In 1996, some establishments in Motor freight transportation and warehousing (SIC 42), Transportation by air (SIC 45), and Transportation services (SIC 47) were reclassified into Air courier services (SIC 4513), which includes support establishments. While the establishments in question were engaged in the delivery of letters, parcels, and packages, they were operated by enterprises engaged in furnishing air delivery of individually addressed letters, parcels, and packages. The ECI sample introduced these reclassifications with the June 1998 reference period.

Within an establishment, specific job categories are selected to represent broader occupational groups. Since March 1995, the jobs are classified according to the 1990 Census, which differs little from the 1980 Census. From June 1986 through December 1994, the jobs were classified according to definitions used in the 1980 Census. Prior to June 1986, they were classified according to the 1970 Census. Differences between the two classification systems are slight, as indicated in the article "Introducing new weights for the Employment Cost Index," in the June 1985 issue of the Monthly Labor Review.

Fixed employment weights are used each quarter to calculate the most aggregate indexes--civilian, private, and state and local government. These fixed weights are also used to derive all of the industry and occupation series indexes. Since March 1995, 1990 employment counts, primarily from the Bureau's Occupational Employment Statistics survey, were used. A description of the reweighting is included in an article "Introducing 1990 Weights for the Employment Cost Index," published in the June 1995 issue of Compensation and Working Conditions, and available upon request. From June 1986 through December 1994, employment counts from the 1980 Census were used as weights. Prior to June 1986, employment counts from the 1970 Census were used.

For the series based on bargaining status, region, or area size, employment data are not available. The employment weights are reallocated within these series each quarter based on the current ECI sample. The indexes for these series, consequently, are not strictly comparable to those for the aggregate, industry, and

occupation series. A fuller explanation of the calculation of index numbers appears in an article, "Estimation procedures for the Employment Cost Index," in the May 1982 issue of the Monthly Labor Review.

Beginning with the March 1990 ECI release, indexes were rebased to June 1989=100. A description of the rebasing is included in the article "Employment Cost Index Rebased to June 1989," in the April 1990 issue of the Monthly Labor Review.

Beginning with the December 1990 ECI release, seasonally adjusted data are available for selected ECI series. Seasonal adjustment removes the effects of events that follow a more or less regular pattern each year. These adjustments make nonseasonal patterns easier to identify. ECI series are seasonally adjusted using either direct or composite seasonally adjusted estimates. Industry and occupational series, such as construction and service occupations, are adjusted directly. More aggregate series, such as civilian or private industry workers, use composite estimates. The composite estimates could be obtained by aggregating either the industry or the occupational components, and the results may differ depending on which method is used. The aggregate seasonally adjusted ECI series are estimated by aggregating the component seasonally adjusted industry series. The seasonal adjustment factors are recalculated once a year. The March release contains data reflecting the newly updated seasonal adjustment factors. The historical data for the last five years are then revised based on the newly estimated factors. The new seasonal factors for 1999, revised seasonally adjusted indexes, and 3-month percent changes for the past five years, are available on the Internet at (<http://stats.bls.gov/ecthome.htm>) or upon request.

The ECI sample is rotated over approximately five years; this makes it more representative and reduces respondent burden. The sample is replaced on a cross-area, cross-industry basis.

The costs per hour worked of compensation components, based on March 1998 data from the ECI, are published in a separate news release titled "Employer Costs for Employee Compensation - March 1998," and in an annual bulletin, Employer Costs for Employee Compensation, 1986-98, (Bulletin 2508). A description of the cost levels data (ECEC) is provided in the article "Analyzing Employers' Costs for Wages, Salaries, and Benefits" in the October 1987 issue of the Monthly Labor Review. This article, along with other ECEC research articles, also appears in the annual bulletin. The cost levels are calculated with current employment weights, rather than the fixed 1990 weights used in computing the ECI. Therefore, year-to-year changes in the cost levels will usually differ from those in the ECI.

Because the ECI is a sample survey, it is subject to sampling errors. Sampling errors are differences that occur between the results computed from a sample of observations and those computed from all observations in the population. The estimates derived from different samples selected using the same sample design may differ from each other. A measure of the variation among these differing estimates is the standard error. It can be used to measure the precision with which an estimate from a particular sample approximates the expected result of all possible samples. The chances are about 68 out of 100 that an estimate from the survey differs from a complete population figure by less than the standard error. The chances are about 90 out of 100 that this difference would be less than 1.6 times the standard error. The statements of comparisons appearing in this publication (except for those in the section on quarterly changes) are significant at a 1.6 standard error level or better, unless otherwise indicated. This means that for differences cited, the estimated difference is greater than 1.6 times the standard error of the difference.

Because standard errors vary from quarter to quarter, the ECI uses a five-year moving average of standard errors to evaluate published series. Currently, in the higher level aggregate series, the standard errors for 3-month changes are generally 0.1 percent or less; for 12-month changes, standard errors are generally 0.25 percent or less. Currently, in the lower level series, standard errors are generally 0.3 percent or less for 3-month changes and 0.6 percent or less for 12-month changes. Series found to have a higher average standard error for the five years ending December 1996 are footnoted in the tables.

BLS is evaluating ECI publication standards as part of its overall quality improvement plan. The first phase of this evaluation, a review of the statistical reliability of the ECI series, is complete. To improve the quality of the ECI estimates, the sample size is being increased and other initiatives, such as revising collection procedures, are being explored. All series will continue to be published until further notice, although, as indicated above, standard errors for some series are large. The five-year moving average of standard errors for all estimates (excluding seasonally adjusted series) will be available on the Internet site (<http://stats.bls.gov/ecthome.htm>) shortly after publication of the news release.

When comparing data by bargaining status, it is important to note that differences may be due to factors other than bargaining status, such as occupational and industry mix. For example, union occupations tend to be concentrated in blue-collar occupations within manufacturing industries. Thus, differences between blue-collar and white-collar pay or differences in manufacturing versus nonmanufacturing industries could explain such differences.

More detailed information on the ECI is available in several sources. These include an annual bulletin--Employment Cost Indexes and Levels, 1975-97, (Bulletin 2504), a chapter in the BLS Handbook of Methods (Bulletin 2490), "National Compensation Measures," and several articles published in the Monthly Labor Review and Compensation and Working Conditions. The annual bulletins are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, or Bureau of Labor Statistics, Publications Sales Center, P.O. Box 2145, Chicago, Illinois 60690, 312/353-1880. Reprints of the articles and other descriptive pieces are available upon request by calling 202/606-6199 or sending email to (ocltinfo@bls.gov). Current and historical data are available at the web site: (<http://stats.bls.gov/ecthome.htm>).

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202/606-7828, Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) phone: 202/606-5897, TDD Message Referral Phone Number: 1-800/326-2577.