

# News

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## **COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN WASHINGTON THIRD QUARTER 2007**

The average weekly wage in Kitsap County increased 8.3 percent from the third quarter of 2006 to the third quarter of 2007, the largest advance among Washington's nine large counties with 75,000 or more jobs as measured by 2006 annual average employment. King County was the second fastest in the State with 8.0-percent growth according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. King County also recorded the highest average weekly wage at \$1,129, followed by Snohomish County at \$842. (See table 1.) Regional Commissioner Richard J. Holden noted that seven of the State's large counties had wage growth above the 4.3-percent national average and two counties exceeded the national wage weekly wage of \$818.

Among the nine large counties in Washington, King County had the highest employment (1,182,800) and accounted for more than 39 percent of the State's workforce. Whatcom County had the lowest employment at 82,700. Seven of the State's nine large counties recorded employment growth greater than the national increase of 0.9 percent in September 2007. Two counties—Yakima and Kitsap—recorded employment declines.

### **Wage Levels in Large Counties**

Two of Washington's large counties had average weekly earnings that ranked in the top third among the 328 largest counties nationwide. King County's wage level was more than \$300 above that for the nation ranking 14<sup>th</sup>; Snohomish County also had a wage above the U.S. average and ranked 90<sup>th</sup>. Four counties placed in the mid-range of the national ranking—Thurston (\$782/140<sup>th</sup>), Kitsap (\$770,158<sup>th</sup>), Pierce (\$755/172<sup>nd</sup>), and Clark (\$749/181<sup>st</sup>).

At the other end of the wage spectrum, Yakima (\$568/324<sup>th</sup>) reported the lowest average weekly wage in the State and 5<sup>th</sup> lowest in the nation, followed by Whatcom (\$659/288<sup>th</sup>) and Spokane (\$681/269<sup>th</sup>). These three counties fell in the bottom third of the nationwide ranking.

Average weekly wages were higher than the national average in 112 of the largest 328 U.S. counties. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$1,585. New York County, N.Y., was second with an average weekly wage of \$1,544, followed by Washington, D.C. (\$1,376), Arlington, Va. (\$1,364), and San Mateo, Calif. (\$1,322).

Three of the 10 counties with the highest wages in the U.S. were located in or around the San Francisco area (Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Francisco, all in California), 3 were located in the greater New York metropolitan area (New York, N.Y., Fairfield, Conn., and Somerset, N.J.), and 3 more were located in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area (Washington, D.C., Arlington, Va., and Fairfax, Va.). Rounding out the top 10 was Suffolk County, Mass., part of the Boston metropolitan area.

There were 215 counties with an average weekly wage below the national average in the third quarter of 2007. The lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron County, Texas (\$518), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$529), Horry, S.C. (\$536), and Webb, Texas (\$548). The average weekly wage in the lowest-paid county, Cameron, was just under one-third the wage in the highest-paid county, Santa Clara.

### **Wage Changes in Large Counties**

As mentioned, seven of Washington's nine large counties recorded wage growth above the U.S. average of 4.3 percent and placed in the top half of the national ranking. (See table 1.) In fact, 3 of Washington's large counties ranked in the top 20 nationwide--Kitsap (8.3 percent/8<sup>th</sup>), King (8.0 percent/11<sup>th</sup>), and Thurston (6.7 percent/18<sup>th</sup>). Two counties had wage increases below that for the nation, but still ranked in the top half-- Whatcom (3.9 percent/134<sup>th</sup>) and Clark (3.7 percent/149<sup>th</sup>).

Among the largest counties, Clayton County, Ga., led the nation in growth in average weekly wages, with an increase of 23.9 percent from the third quarter of 2006. Muscogee, Ga., was second with growth of 12.1 percent, followed by the counties of Santa Clara, Calif. (11.8 percent), Rock Island, Ill. (11.5 percent), and Davidson, Tenn. (9.1 percent).

Ten large counties experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. The five largest decreases in wages occurred in the counties of Trumbull, Ohio (-10.6 percent), Vanderburgh, Ind. (-6.1 percent), Genesee, Mich. (-4.0 percent), Saginaw, Mich. (-3.1 percent), and Montgomery, Ohio (-3.0 percent).

### **State Average Weekly Wages**

Eight of the 15 states in which the average weekly wage levels surpassed that for the nation fell in a contiguous band along the east coast stretching from Massachusetts to Virginia. The five highest wage levels in the U.S. were in the District of Columbia (\$1,376), Connecticut (\$1,021), New York (\$1,009), Massachusetts (\$1,002), and New Jersey (\$965). (See table 2.) Average weekly wages in this group were 18 percent or more above that for the nation. At the other end of the scale, three states had wage levels averaging less than 75 percent of national earnings: South Dakota (\$598), Mississippi (\$607), and Montana (\$608).

Washington's 6.7-percent wage growth was the fastest in the nation in the third quarter of 2007. Connecticut followed closely with a 6.6-percent increase. Rounding out the top five were New York (6.1 percent), North Dakota (5.8 percent), and Massachusetts, Nevada, Oklahoma, and Utah (5.5 percent each). Rhode Island was the only state to experience an over-the-year decline in wages, down 0.1 percent. The smallest wage gains among the states were registered in Delaware (1.2 percent), Indiana (2.2 percent), and Michigan (2.4 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 9.0 million employer reports cover 136.2 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 then is 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/](http://www.bls.gov/cew/); however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised (see Note below) and will not necessarily 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. *Employment and Wages, Annual Averages 2006* is available in a portable document format (PDF) on the BLS Web site at [www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn06.htm](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 [www.bls.gov/cew/](http://www.bls.gov/cew/).

QCEW-based news releases issued by other regional offices have been placed at one convenient Web site location, [www.bls.gov/cew/cewregional.htm](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 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.

#### 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 9 largest counties in Washington, third quarter 2007(2)**

Area	Employment		Average Weekly Wage (3)			
	September 2007 (thousands)	Percent change, third quarter 2006-07 (5)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level (4)	Percent change, third quarter 2006-07 (5)	National ranking by percent change (4)
United States (6)	136,246.9	0.9	\$818	--	4.3	--
Washington	2,976.5	2.1	878	8	6.7	1
Clark, Wash.	134.0	1.5	749	181	3.7	149
King, Wash.	1,182.8	2.3	1,129	14	8.0	11
Kitsap, Wash.	83.9	-0.1	770	158	8.3	8
Pierce, Wash.	278.0	2.0	755	172	5.4	55
Snohomish, Wash.	255.0	4.4	842	90	5.0	67
Spokane, Wash.	210.6	1.9	681	269	4.9	71
Thurston, Wash.	99.8	3.0	782	140	6.7	18
Whatcom, Wash.	82.7	2.2	659	288	3.9	134
Yakima, Wash.	108.1	-0.5	568	324	5.4	55

(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.

**Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages by state, third quarter 2007(2)**

State	Employment		Average weekly wage (3)			
	September 2007 (thousands)	Percent change, third quarter 2006-07	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2006-07	National ranking by percent change
United States (4)	136,246.9	0.9	\$818	-	4.3	-
Alabama	1,959.0	1.1	707	32	3.7	37
Alaska	327.3	0.7	840	13	5.4	9
Arizona	2,644.9	0.5	783	20	4.1	25
Arkansas	1,184.5	0.3	629	46	4.1	25
California	15,755.0	0.7	932	6	4.5	18
Colorado	2,314.3	2.4	844	12	3.2	42
Connecticut	1,696.9	1.0	1,021	2	6.6	2
Delaware	425.2	0.1	860	10	1.2	50
District of Columbia	679.0	0.6	1,376	1	5.3	12
Florida	7,879.9	-0.9	741	26	4.1	25
Georgia	4,089.4	1.2	782	21	4.1	25
Hawaii	624.4	0.3	760	22	5.4	9
Idaho	675.5	2.2	634	45	3.4	41
Illinois	5,917.6	0.6	866	9	4.0	32
Indiana	2,937.4	0.5	702	34	2.2	49
Iowa	1,494.5	0.9	668	40	4.2	22
Kansas	1,368.7	1.7	680	38	2.7	46
Kentucky	1,814.3	1.0	676	39	3.0	44
Louisiana	1,880.8	2.7	716	31	4.5	18
Maine	615.3	0.7	660	44	3.9	35
Maryland	2,563.7	0.7	892	7	4.1	25
Massachusetts	3,261.0	1.0	1,002	4	5.5	5
Michigan	4,218.2	-1.4	808	16	2.4	48
Minnesota	2,713.3	0.9	822	15	4.6	16
Mississippi	1,142.2	0.6	607	50	3.8	36
Missouri	2,746.7	0.8	719	29	4.2	22
Montana	446.1	2.7	608	49	4.6	16
Nebraska	922.7	1.7	666	41	5.4	9
Nevada	1,286.4	-0.1	792	19	5.5	5
New Hampshire	637.2	0.3	799	18	3.2	42
New Jersey	3,985.2	0.1	965	5	3.7	37
New Mexico	830.4	0.8	682	37	4.1	25
New York	8,585.3	1.3	1,009	3	6.1	3
North Carolina	4,104.1	2.4	719	29	3.5	40
North Dakota	347.4	1.5	621	48	5.8	4
Ohio	5,331.9	-0.2	745	25	2.8	45
Oklahoma	1,548.2	1.8	666	41	5.5	5
Oregon	1,751.7	1.2	750	24	4.2	22
Pennsylvania	5,673.4	0.5	802	17	4.4	20
Rhode Island	486.1	-1.0	759	23	-0.1	51
South Carolina	1,904.7	1.7	664	43	3.6	39
South Dakota	397.5	2.0	598	51	4.7	15
Tennessee	2,774.4	0.5	728	28	4.3	21
Texas	10,304.9	2.9	825	14	5.0	13
Utah	1,231.6	3.6	696	36	5.5	5
Vermont	305.2	-0.2	699	35	4.0	32
Virginia	3,686.6	1.0	857	11	5.0	13
Washington	2,976.5	2.1	878	8	6.7	1
West Virginia	713.8	0.3	623	47	4.0	32
Wisconsin	2,802.3	-0.1	705	33	2.6	47
Wyoming	284.3	3.6	734	27	4.1	25
Puerto Rico	1,008.0	-1.1	453	(5)	2.5	(5)
Virgin Islands	45.0	0.7	682	(5)	-0.3	(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.