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USUAL WEEKLY EARNINGS OF WAGE AND SALARY WORKERS: SECOND QUARTER 2008

Median weekly earnings of the nation's 107.1 million full-time wage and salary workers were \$719 in the second quarter of 2008, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. This was 4.2 percent higher than a year earlier, compared with a gain of 4.4 percent in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) over the same period.

Data on usual earnings are collected as part of the Current Population Survey, a nationwide sample survey of households in which respondents are asked, among other things, how much each wage and salary worker usually earns. (See the Technical Note.) Highlights from the second-quarter data are:

- Women who usually worked full time had median earnings of \$634 per week, or 79.3 percent of the \$800 median for men. The female-to-male earnings ratios were higher among blacks (92.4 percent) and Hispanics (86.8 percent) than among whites (78.4 percent) or Asians (76.0 percent). (See table 1.)
- Median earnings for black men working at full-time jobs were \$615 per week, 74.4 percent of the median for white men (\$827). The difference was less among women, as black women's median earnings (\$568) were 87.7 percent of those for their white counterparts (\$648). Overall, median earnings of Hispanics who worked full time (\$537) were lower than those of blacks (\$591), whites (\$738), and Asians (\$855). (See table 1.)
- Among men, those age 45 to 54 and 55 to 64 had the highest median weekly earnings, \$935 and \$946, respectively. Among women, weekly earnings were highest for those age 55 to 64 (\$716). (See table 2.)
- Among the major occupational groups, persons employed full time in managerial, professional, and related occupations had the highest median weekly earnings—\$1,243 for men and \$884 for women. Persons employed in service jobs earned the least. (See table 3.)
- Full-time workers age 25 years and over without a high school diploma had median weekly earnings of \$449, compared with \$620 for high school graduates (no college) and \$1,105 for those holding at least a bachelor's degree. Among college graduates with advanced degrees

(professional or master's degree and above), the highest 10 percent of male workers made \$3,235 or more per week, compared with \$2,070 or more for their female counterparts. (See table 4.)

Technical Note

The estimates in this release were obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS), which provides the basic information on the labor force, employment, and unemployment. The survey is conducted monthly for the Bureau of Labor Statistics by the U.S. Census Bureau from a scientifically selected national sample of about 60,000 households, with coverage in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The earnings data are collected from one-quarter of the CPS monthly sample and are limited to wages and salaries. The data, therefore, exclude self-employment income.

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.

Reliability

Statistics based on the CPS are subject to both sampling and nonsampling error. When a sample, rather than the entire population, is surveyed, there is a chance that the sample estimates may differ from the "true" population values they represent. The exact difference, or *sampling error*, varies depending on the particular sample selected, and this variability is measured by the standard error of the estimate. There is about a 90-percent chance, or level of confidence, that an estimate based on a sample will differ by no more than 1.6 standard errors from the "true" population value because of sampling error. BLS analyses are generally conducted at the 90-percent level of confidence.

The CPS data also are affected by *nonsampling error*. Nonsampling error can occur for many reasons, including the failure to sample a segment of the population, inability to obtain information for all respondents in the sample, inability or unwillingness of respondents to provide correct information, and errors made in the collection or processing of the data.

For a full discussion of the reliability of data from the CPS and information on estimating standard errors, see the Household Data section of the "Explanatory Notes and Estimates of Error" at http://www.bls.gov/cps/eetech_methods.pdf.

Definitions

The principal definitions used in connection with the earnings series are described briefly below.

Usual weekly earnings. Data represent earnings before taxes and other deductions and include any overtime pay, commissions, or tips usually received (at the main job in the case of multiple jobholders.) Prior to 1994, respondents were asked how much they usually earned per week. Since January 1994, respondents have been asked to identify the easiest way for them to report earnings (hourly, weekly, biweekly, twice monthly, monthly, annually, other) and how much they usually earn in the reported time period. Earnings reported on a basis other than weekly are converted to a weekly equivalent. The term "usual" is as perceived

by the respondent. If the respondent asks for a definition of usual, interviewers are instructed to define the term as more than half the weeks worked during the past 4 or 5 months.

Medians (and other quantiles) of weekly earnings. The median (or upper limit of the second quartile) is the amount which divides a given earnings distribution into two equal groups, one having earnings above the median and the other having earnings below the median. Ten percent of a given distribution have earnings below the upper limit of the first decile (90 percent have higher earnings); 25 percent have earnings below the upper limit of the first quartile (75 percent have higher earnings); 75 percent have earnings below the upper limit of the third quartile (25 percent have higher earnings); and 90 percent have earnings below the upper limit of the ninth decile (10 percent have higher earnings).

The estimating procedure places each reported or calculated weekly earnings value into \$50-wide intervals which are centered around multiples of \$50. The actual value is estimated through the linear interpolation of the interval in which the quantile boundary lies.

Over-the-year changes in the medians (and other quantile boundaries) for specific groups may not necessarily be consistent with the movements estimated for the overall quantile boundary. The most common reasons for this possible anomaly are: (1) There could be a change in the relative weights of the subgroups. For example, the medians of both 16-to-24 year olds and those 25 years and over may rise; but if the lower-earning 16-to-24 group accounts for a greatly increased share of the total, the overall median could actually fall. (2) There could be a large change in the shape of the distribution of reported earnings, particularly near a quantile boundary. This could be caused by survey observations that are clustered at rounded values, such as \$250, \$300, \$400. An estimate lying in a \$50-wide centered interval containing such a cluster or "spike" tends to change more slowly than one in other intervals.

Wage and salary workers. Workers who receive wages, salaries, commissions, tips, payment in kind, or piece rates. The group includes employees in both the private and public sectors but, for the purposes of the earnings series, excludes all self-employed persons, regardless of whether or not their businesses are incorporated.

Full-time workers. Workers who usually work 35 hours or more per week at their sole or principal job.

Part-time workers. Workers who usually work fewer than 35 hours per week at their sole or principal job.

Constant dollars. The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) is used to convert current dollars to constant (1982) dollars.

Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. Refers to persons who identified themselves in the enumeration process as being Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race.

Table 1. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted

Characteristic	Number of workers (in thousands)		Median weekly earnings			
	II 2007	II 2008	In current dollars		In constant (1982) dollars	
			II 2007	II 2008	II 2007	II 2008
SEX AND AGE						
Total, 16 years and over	106,879	107,119	\$690	\$719	\$320	\$320
Men, 16 years and over	60,507	59,759	763	800	355	356
16 to 24 years	6,537	6,169	436	469	203	209
25 years and over	53,970	53,589	819	862	381	384
Women, 16 years and over	46,372	47,360	607	634	282	282
16 to 24 years	4,633	4,692	404	415	188	185
25 years and over	41,739	42,668	635	668	295	297
RACE, HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY, AND SEX						
White	86,393	86,389	713	738	331	329
Men	50,162	49,412	783	827	364	368
Women	36,232	36,977	620	648	288	289
Black or African American	13,048	12,889	562	591	261	263
Men	6,190	6,105	597	615	278	274
Women	6,858	6,785	521	568	242	253
Asian	5,025	5,267	827	855	384	381
Men	2,766	2,804	942	975	438	434
Women	2,258	2,463	709	741	330	330
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	15,943	15,951	503	537	234	239
Men	10,249	10,059	523	569	243	253
Women	5,694	5,892	470	494	218	220

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

Table 2. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by age, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and sex, second quarter 2008 averages, not seasonally adjusted

Age, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	Total		Men		Women	
	Number of workers (in thousands)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (in thousands)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (in thousands)	Median weekly earnings
TOTAL						
16 years and over	107,119	\$719	59,759	\$800	47,360	\$634
16 to 24 years	10,861	447	6,169	469	4,692	415
16 to 19 years	1,623	350	949	382	674	316
20 to 24 years	9,238	467	5,220	483	4,018	439
25 years and over	96,258	760	53,589	862	42,668	668
25 to 54 years	79,147	753	44,355	849	34,792	662
25 to 34 years	26,019	666	14,872	701	11,146	626
35 to 44 years	26,619	808	15,081	924	11,538	681
45 to 54 years	26,509	817	14,402	935	12,107	694
55 years and over	17,111	800	9,234	919	7,877	700
55 to 64 years	14,648	828	7,869	946	6,780	716
65 years and over	2,462	624	1,366	711	1,097	591
White						
16 years and over	86,389	738	49,412	827	36,977	648
16 to 24 years	8,880	457	5,127	476	3,753	423
25 years and over	77,509	782	44,284	887	33,225	684
25 to 54 years	63,061	773	36,311	873	26,750	677
55 years and over	14,448	825	7,974	951	6,474	710
Black or African American						
16 years and over	12,889	591	6,105	615	6,785	568
16 to 24 years	1,268	405	667	425	602	367
25 years and over	11,621	613	5,438	655	6,183	590
25 to 54 years	10,020	613	4,696	658	5,324	587
55 years and over	1,601	618	742	618	859	620
Asian						
16 years and over	5,267	855	2,804	975	2,463	741
16 to 24 years	292	465	137	508	156	420
25 years and over	4,974	889	2,668	1,008	2,307	763
25 to 54 years	4,204	915	2,310	1,020	1,894	774
55 years and over	771	753	358	857	413	728
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity						
16 years and over	15,951	537	10,059	569	5,892	494
16 to 24 years	2,161	421	1,387	428	774	410
25 years and over	13,790	574	8,672	599	5,118	511
25 to 54 years	12,347	574	7,793	600	4,554	506
55 years and over	1,443	580	879	591	565	559

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

Table 3. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by occupation and sex, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted

Occupation and sex	Number of workers (in thousands)		Median weekly earnings	
	II 2007	II 2008	II 2007	II 2008
TOTAL				
Management, professional, and related occupations	38,817	39,861	\$997	\$1,028
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	15,591	15,947	1,115	1,135
Professional and related occupations	23,226	23,914	945	978
Service occupations	14,811	14,700	459	475
Sales and office occupations	25,536	25,792	595	610
Sales and related occupations	10,477	10,325	640	645
Office and administrative support occupations	15,059	15,467	578	598
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	12,565	11,815	658	691
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	762	800	382	409
Construction and extraction occupations	7,322	6,551	634	677
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	4,482	4,464	744	778
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	15,149	14,951	578	600
Production occupations	8,596	8,045	583	594
Transportation and material moving occupations	6,553	6,905	568	606
Men				
Management, professional, and related occupations	19,402	19,623	1,176	1,243
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	8,763	8,816	1,237	1,356
Professional and related occupations	10,639	10,807	1,142	1,169
Service occupations	7,526	7,255	521	539
Sales and office occupations	9,632	9,820	722	730
Sales and related occupations	5,831	5,727	802	786
Office and administrative support occupations	3,801	4,093	613	643
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	12,141	11,317	661	693
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	612	638	394	414
Construction and extraction occupations	7,192	6,407	635	676
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	4,336	4,271	741	773
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	11,806	11,745	619	648
Production occupations	6,154	5,797	643	664
Transportation and material moving occupations	5,652	5,947	597	629
Women				
Management, professional, and related occupations	19,415	20,238	859	884
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	6,827	7,131	952	922
Professional and related occupations	12,587	13,108	823	868
Service occupations	7,285	7,445	404	416
Sales and office occupations	15,904	15,973	546	575
Sales and related occupations	4,646	4,598	489	500
Office and administrative support occupations	11,257	11,375	569	591
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	425	498	559	616
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	149	162	351	389
Construction and extraction occupations	130	144	566	733
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	146	192	782	806
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	3,343	3,206	448	467
Production occupations	2,442	2,248	448	470
Transportation and material moving occupations	901	958	446	450

NOTE: Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

Table 4. Quartiles and selected deciles of usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, second quarter 2008 averages, not seasonally adjusted

Characteristic	Number of workers (in thousands)	Upper limit of:				
		First decile	First quartile	Second quartile (median)	Third quartile	Ninth decile
SEX, RACE, AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY						
Total, 16 years and over	107,119	\$346	\$484	\$719	\$1,122	\$1,695
Men	59,759	377	519	800	1,252	1,895
Women	47,360	320	434	634	947	1,388
White	86,389	355	495	738	1,145	1,745
Men	49,412	386	536	827	1,279	1,912
Women	36,977	325	446	648	961	1,411
Black or African American	12,889	315	413	591	869	1,262
Men	6,105	327	434	615	919	1,334
Women	6,785	306	398	568	827	1,196
Asian	5,267	361	518	855	1,378	1,906
Men	2,804	390	591	975	1,541	2,082
Women	2,463	335	477	741	1,151	1,641
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	15,951	298	384	537	798	1,185
Men	10,059	316	407	569	845	1,249
Women	5,892	280	344	494	734	1,099
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT						
Total, 25 years and over	96,258	369	511	760	1,165	1,760
Less than a high school diploma	8,422	282	344	449	619	891
High school graduates, no college ¹	27,291	335	447	620	893	1,232
Some college or associate degree	26,612	382	512	727	1,036	1,434
Bachelor's degree and higher ²	33,933	548	749	1,105	1,640	2,306
Bachelor's degree only	21,892	511	696	999	1,496	2,100
Advanced degree	12,041	637	883	1,298	1,865	2,767
Men, 25 years and over	53,589	399	572	862	1,331	1,920
Less than a high school diploma	5,673	301	379	497	687	987
High school graduates, no college ¹	15,864	380	510	715	1,006	1,394
Some college or associate degree	13,834	425	590	843	1,181	1,609
Bachelor's degree and higher ²	18,219	591	842	1,277	1,889	2,765
Bachelor's degree only	11,730	565	778	1,164	1,745	2,378
Advanced degree	6,488	682	987	1,521	2,100	3,235
Women, 25 years and over	42,668	337	467	668	984	1,432
Less than a high school diploma	2,749	251	303	378	497	625
High school graduates, no college ¹	11,427	305	389	521	716	960
Some college or associate degree	12,778	350	470	632	870	1,183
Bachelor's degree and higher ²	15,714	508	678	942	1,351	1,879
Bachelor's degree only	10,162	480	633	864	1,234	1,756
Advanced degree	5,553	613	820	1,132	1,521	2,070

¹ Includes persons with a high school diploma or equivalent.

² Includes persons with bachelor's, master's, professional, and doctoral degrees.

NOTE: Ten percent of all full-time wage and salary workers earn less than the upper limit of the first decile; 25 percent earn less than the upper limit of the first quartile; 50 percent earn less than the upper limit of the second quartile, or median; 75 percent earn less than the upper limit of the

third quartile; and 90 percent earn less than the upper limit of the ninth decile. Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

Table 5. Median usual weekly earnings of part-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted

Characteristic	Number of workers (in thousands)		Median weekly earnings	
	II 2007	II 2008	II 2007	II 2008
SEX AND AGE				
Total, 16 years and over	22,470	22,534	\$207	\$218
Men, 16 years and over	6,909	7,362	194	207
16 to 24 years	3,514	3,604	161	162
25 years and over	3,396	3,758	248	274
Women, 16 years and over	15,561	15,172	214	224
16 to 24 years	4,758	4,564	153	160
25 years and over	10,802	10,608	256	263
RACE, HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY, AND SEX				
White	18,834	18,828	208	220
Men	5,647	6,096	193	207
Women	13,186	12,732	216	227
Black or African American	2,194	2,289	197	206
Men	752	767	195	206
Women	1,442	1,523	200	206
Asian	861	875	227	244
Men	313	305	217	213
Women	548	569	239	270
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	2,521	2,687	206	220
Men	835	996	227	234
Women	1,686	1,692	200	214

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.