

News

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EMPLOYMENT COST INDEX - DECEMBER 1985

The Employment Cost Index (ECI) increased 4.3 percent for the year ended in December 1985, down from 5.2 percent for the year ended in December 1984, the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. The ECI measures changes in compensation costs, which include wages, salaries, and employer costs for employee benefits.

Compensation costs rose 0.6 percent in the September-December 1985 period, below the 1.2 percent gain in the same period a year ago. This slowdown occurred for both private industry workers (0.6 percent, down from 1.3 percent) and State and local government workers (0.7 percent, down from 1.0 percent).

For the year ended in December 1985, compensation cost increases (4.3 percent) were below those a year earlier (5.2 percent). In contrast, wage and salary increases were about the same as a year ago (4.4 percent and 4.5 percent, respectively)--showing that deceleration in employee benefit costs was largely responsible for the slowdown in compensation cost increases.

Over-the-year wage gains in private industry varied widely by occupation group, ranging from 2.3 percent for service workers to 9.8 percent for sales workers (the most volatile ECI series, which is heavily influenced by commission earnings).

This release provides, for the first time, index series for "private industry workers, excluding sales workers," and for "white-collar workers, excluding sales workers." (See tables 3 and 4.) The new series permit

* Beginning with the June 1986 news release, ECI estimates will *
* be based on fixed employment counts from the 1980 Census of *
* Population rather than from the 1970 Census, as in the past. *
* The updating of ECI weights is described in an article, *
* "Introducing New Weights for the Employment Cost Index," in the *
* June 1985 issue of the Monthly Labor Review. *
* *
* ECI estimates for the period March 1985 to March 1986 will be *
* recalculated, using the 1980 Census weights. The recalcula- *
* tions, which will be available in September 1986, will provide *
* a one-year overlap for ECI estimates based on 1970 and 1980 *
* Census weights. *

examination of compensation and wage trends, free from the influence of sales worker pay which reflects volatile changes in commission payments.

Pay for private industry workers excluding sales workers rose 3.6 percent over the year ended in December 1985, compared with 4.1 percent for all private industry workers. The impact of sales worker pay gains was even greater for white-collar workers: With sales workers excluded, white-collar pay rose 4.0 percent compared with 4.9 percent when sales workers were included.

Pay increases over the year ended in December also varied widely among industries, ranging from 3.1 percent for construction to 9.2 percent for finance, insurance, and real estate (also strongly influenced by commission earnings).

A 3.6 percent pay increase for manufacturing workers in 1985 was the lowest recorded for those workers in the 10-year history of the series. A record low was also posted for workers in nondurable goods manufacturing (3.7 percent), while pay increases for workers in durable goods manufacturing matched their previous low (3.6 percent). (See table 4.)

Over-the-year pay gains for nonunion workers (4.6 percent) exceeded those of union workers (3.1 percent). This relationship held in goods-producing industries (4.1 percent compared with 2.9 percent), as well as in service-producing industries (5.0 and 3.5 percent, respectively). (See table 6.)

The December 1985 ECI level stood at 129.2 for compensation costs, based on June 1981=100. The ECI covers private industry workers (excluding farms and households) and State and local government workers. It is not seasonally adjusted.

ECI news releases for the remainder of 1986 will be published on the following schedule:

<u>Reference Month</u>	<u>Release Date</u>
March 1986	April 29, 1986
June 1986	July 29, 1986
September 1986	October 28, 1986

COMPENSATION

Table 1. Employment Cost Index by occupation and industry group 1/

(Not seasonally adjusted)

Series	Indexes (June 1981=100)			Percent Changes for						
	Dec. 1984	Sept. 1985	Dec. 1985	3 Months Ended		12 Months Ended		Dec. 1984	Sept. 1985	Dec. 1985
				Dec. 1984	Sept. 1985	Dec. 1984	Sept. 1985			
Civilian workers 2/	123.9	128.4	129.2	1.2	1.6	0.6	5.2	4.9	4.3	
Workers, by occupational group										
White-collar workers	125.5	130.7	131.6	1.2	1.9	.7	5.6	5.4	4.9	
Blue-collar workers	120.9	124.4	124.9	1.1	1.1	.4	4.4	4.0	3.3	
Service workers	126.8	130.9	131.8	1.8	2.3	.7	6.5	5.1	3.9	
Workers, by industry division										
Goods-producing 3/	121.4	124.9	125.5	1.1	.8	.5	4.7	4.0	3.4	
Manufacturing	122.0	125.5	126.0	1.3	.7	.4	5.2	4.2	3.3	
Service-producing 4/	125.5	130.7	131.5	1.3	2.2	.6	5.6	5.5	4.8	
Services	130.9	136.4	137.1	1.6	2.9	.5	6.8	5.9	4.7	
Health services	-	-	-	-	1.6	.3	-	-	-	
Public administration 5/	128.6	134.2	134.8	1.3	3.0	.4	5.9	5.8	4.8	
Nonmanufacturing	124.8	129.7	130.6	1.2	2.0	.7	5.2	5.2	4.6	
Private industry workers 6/	122.7	126.8	127.5	1.3	1.3	.6	4.9	4.7	3.9	
Workers, by occupational group										
White-collar workers	123.9	128.8	129.8	1.2	1.3	.8	5.1	5.2	4.8	
Blue-collar workers	120.6	124.0	124.4	1.1	1.0	.3	4.2	3.9	3.2	
Service workers	125.7	128.8	129.5	2.0	1.8	.5	6.6	4.5	3.0	
Workers, by industry division										
Goods-producing 3/	121.2	124.6	125.3	1.1	.6	.6	4.6	3.9	3.4	
Service-producing 4/	123.9	128.7	129.4	1.4	1.8	.5	5.1	5.3	4.4	
State and local government workers	130.1	136.5	137.5	1.0	3.4	.7	6.6	6.0	5.7	
Workers, by occupational group										
White-collar workers	131.1	137.6	138.6	1.1	3.5	.7	6.9	6.1	5.7	
Blue-collar workers	125.9	131.9	132.7	.7	2.6	.6	5.6	5.5	5.4	
Workers, by industry division										
Services	131.3	137.9	139.1	1.1	3.5	.9	7.1	6.2	5.9	
Hospitals and other services 7/	129.2	134.1	135.2	1.0	2.0	.8	5.4	4.8	4.6	
Health services	-	-	-	-	2.7	.6	-	-	-	
Schools	132.0	139.1	140.3	1.1	4.0	.9	7.7	6.5	6.3	
Elementary and secondary	133.5	140.9	142.0	1.1	4.7	.8	7.7	6.7	6.4	
Public administration 5/	128.6	134.2	134.8	1.3	3.0	.4	5.9	5.8	4.8	

- Data not available.
NOTE: See footnotes at end of tables.

WAGES AND SALARIES

Table 2. Employment Cost Index for wages and salaries only, by occupation and industry group
(Not seasonally adjusted)

Series	Indexes (June 1981=100)		Percent Changes for						
	Dec. 1984	Sept. 1985	Dec. 1985	3 Months Ended		12 Months Ended		Dec. 1985	
				Dec. 1984	Sept. 1985	Dec. 1984	Sept. 1985		
Civilian workers 2/	121.7	126.3	127.0	1.2	1.7	0.6	4.5	5.0	4.4
Workers, by occupational group									
White-collar workers	123.5	128.8	129.8	1.1	1.9	.8	4.7	5.4	5.1
Blue-collar workers	118.2	122.0	122.3	1.0	1.2	.2	3.7	4.3	3.5
Service workers	124.3	128.0	128.6	1.6	2.2	.5	5.9	4.7	3.5
Workers, by industry division									
Goods-producing 3/	118.8	122.5	123.1	1.0	.8	.5	3.8	4.2	3.6
Manufacturing	119.5	123.2	123.8	1.3	.7	.5	4.4	4.4	3.6
Service-producing 4/	123.4	128.6	129.4	1.1	2.2	.6	4.8	5.4	4.9
Services	128.9	134.2	134.8	1.3	2.8	.4	6.3	5.5	4.6
Health services	-	-	-	-	1.4	.2	-	-	-
Public administration 5/	125.7	131.4	132.0	1.0	3.3	.5	5.3	5.6	5.0
Nonmanufacturing	122.6	127.6	128.4	1.1	2.1	.6	4.4	5.2	4.7
Private industry workers 6/	120.6	124.9	125.6	1.2	1.3	.6	4.1	4.8	4.1
Workers, by occupational group									
White-collar workers	122.3	127.3	128.3	1.2	1.4	.8	4.4	5.3	4.9
Blue-collar workers	118.0	121.7	122.0	1.1	1.2	.2	3.6	4.3	3.4
Service workers	123.7	126.3	126.6	2.1	1.5	.2	6.2	4.2	2.3
Workers, by industry division									
Goods-producing 3/	118.7	122.3	122.9	1.0	.7	.5	3.8	4.1	3.5
Service-producing 4/	122.1	127.0	127.8	1.2	1.8	.6	4.4	5.3	4.7
State and local government workers	127.1	133.2	134.2	.8	3.5	.8	5.9	5.6	5.6
Workers, by occupational group									
White-collar workers	128.0	134.3	135.3	.7	3.6	.7	6.1	5.7	5.7
Blue-collar workers	122.5	127.9	128.4	.5	2.7	.4	4.8	4.9	4.8
Workers, by industry division									
Services	128.1	134.5	135.6	.7	3.7	.8	6.2	5.7	5.9
Hospitals and other services 7/	125.9	130.2	130.9	.6	1.7	.5	4.4	4.1	4.0
Health services	-	-	-	-	2.6	.3	-	-	-
Schools	128.7	135.8	137.0	.7	4.3	.9	6.7	6.3	6.4
Elementary and secondary	130.2	137.5	138.5	.7	4.9	.7	7.0	6.3	6.4
Public administration 5/	125.7	131.4	132.0	1.0	3.3	.5	5.3	5.6	5.0

- Data not available.
NOTE: See footnotes at end of tables.

COMPENSATION

Table 3. Employment Cost Index, private industry workers, $\frac{6}{}$ by occupation and industry group
(Not seasonally adjusted)

Series	Indexes (June 1981=100)		Percent Changes for						
	Dec. 1984	Sept. 1985	Dec. 1985	3 Months Ended		12 Months Ended		Sept. 1985	Dec. 1985
				Dec. 1984	Sept. 1985	Dec. 1984	Sept. 1985		
Private industry workers $\frac{6}{}$	122.7	126.8	127.5	1.3	1.3	4.9	4.7	3.9	
Excluding sales workers	123.3	127.1	127.6	1.2	1.3	5.1	4.4	3.5	
Workers, by occupational group									
White-collar workers	123.9	128.8	129.8	1.2	1.3	5.1	5.2	4.8	
Excluding sales workers	125.5	129.8	130.4	1.2	1.3	5.6	4.7	3.9	
Blue-collar workers	120.6	124.0	124.4	1.1	1.0	4.2	3.9	3.2	
Service workers	125.7	128.8	129.5	2.0	1.8	6.6	4.5	3.0	
Workers, by industry division									
Goods-producing $\frac{3}{}$	121.2	124.6	125.3	1.1	.6	4.6	3.9	3.4	
Manufacturing	122.0	125.5	126.0	1.3	.7	5.2	4.2	3.3	
Service-producing $\frac{4}{}$	123.9	128.7	129.4	1.4	1.8	5.1	5.3	4.4	
Transportation and public utilities	-	-	-	-	1.4	-	-	-	
Transportation	-	-	-	-	1.4	-	-	-	
Public utilities	-	-	-	-	1.7	-	-	-	
Wholesale and retail trade	-	-	-	-	1.2	-	-	-	
Finance, insurance, and real estate	-	-	-	-	1.9	1.6	-	-	
Services	-	-	-	-	2.3	.3	-	-	
Health services	-	-	-	-	1.2	.3	-	-	
Nonmanufacturing	123.1	127.6	128.4	1.2	1.6	4.8	4.9	4.3	

- Data not available.
NOTE: See footnotes at end of tables.

WAGES AND SALARIES

Table 4. Employment Cost Index for wages and salaries only, private industry workers, 6/ by occupation and industry group

(Not seasonally adjusted)

Series	Indexes (June 1981=100)			Percent Changes for						
	Dec. 1984	Sept. 1985	Dec. 1985	3 Months Ended		12 Months Ended		Dec. 1984	Sept. 1985	Dec. 1985
				Dec. 1984	Sept. 1985	Dec. 1985	Dec. 1984			
Private industry workers <u>6/</u>	120.6	124.9	125.6	1.2	1.3	0.6	4.1	4.8	4.1	4.9
Excluding sales workers.....	121.5	125.5	125.9	1.3	1.3	.3	4.6	4.6	4.6	3.6
Workers, by occupational group										
White-collar workers.....	122.3	127.3	128.3	1.2	1.4	.8	4.4	5.3	4.4	4.9
Excluding sales workers.....	124.4	128.8	129.4	1.2	1.3	.5	5.1	4.8	5.1	4.0
Professional and technical workers.....	127.3	131.2	131.5	1.7	1.9	.2	5.7	4.8	5.7	3.3
Managers and administrators.....	122.2	127.7	128.4	1.0	1.9	.5	5.6	5.5	5.6	5.1
Sales workers.....	111.6	119.3	122.5	1.0	1.6	2.7	.4	8.0	.4	9.8
Clerical workers.....	122.9	127.1	127.9	.7	1.2	.6	3.9	4.2	3.9	4.1
Blue-collar workers.....	118.0	121.7	122.0	1.1	1.2	.2	3.6	4.3	3.6	3.4
Craft and kindred workers.....	119.4	123.7	123.8	1.2	1.4	.1	3.5	4.8	3.5	3.7
Operatives, except transport.....	117.9	121.1	121.6	1.1	.8	.4	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.1
Transport equipment operatives.....	114.0	117.7	117.8	.5	1.7	.1	3.4	3.8	3.4	3.3
Nonfarm laborers.....	115.9	118.6	119.8	1.0	.1	1.0	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4
Service workers.....	123.7	126.3	126.6	2.1	1.5	.2	6.2	4.2	6.2	2.3
Workers, by industry division										
Goods-producing <u>3/</u>	118.7	122.3	122.9	1.0	.7	.5	3.8	4.1	3.8	3.5
Construction.....	114.4	117.3	117.9	.1	.6	.5	1.3	2.6	1.3	3.1
Manufacturing.....	119.5	123.2	123.8	1.3	.7	.5	4.4	4.4	4.4	3.6
Durables.....	119.1	122.7	123.4	1.2	.6	.6	4.1	4.2	4.1	3.6
Nondurables.....	120.2	124.0	124.6	1.3	1.1	.5	4.9	4.6	4.9	3.7
Service-producing <u>4/</u>	122.1	127.0	127.8	1.2	1.8	.6	4.4	5.3	4.4	4.7
Transportation and public utilities.....	120.7	124.8	125.2	.7	1.6	.3	3.3	4.1	3.3	3.7
Transportation.....	-	-	-	-	1.5	-1.0	-	-	-	-
Public utilities.....	-	-	-	-	1.7	1.0	-	-	-	-
Wholesale and retail trade.....	118.1	122.7	123.7	1.4	1.3	.8	5.2	5.3	5.2	4.7
Wholesale trade.....	122.9	127.7	128.3	1.8	.7	.5	5.5	5.8	5.5	4.4
Retail trade.....	116.2	120.8	121.9	1.1	1.6	.9	5.1	5.1	5.1	4.9
Finance, insurance, and real estate.....	115.8	124.1	126.5	.4	2.0	1.9	-.9	7.6	-.9	9.2
Services.....	129.5	133.9	134.1	1.9	2.2	1.1	6.2	5.4	6.2	3.6
Health services.....	-	-	-	-	1.0	.2	-	-	-	-
Nonmanufacturing.....	121.2	125.9	126.6	1.1	1.6	.6	4.0	5.0	4.0	4.5

- Data not available.
NOTE: See footnotes at end of tables.

COMPENSATION

Table 5. Employment Cost Index, private industry workers, by bargaining status, region, and area size &/
(Not seasonally adjusted)

Series	Indexes (June 1981=100)			Percent Changes for						
	Dec. 1984	Sept. 1985	Dec. 1985	3 Months Ended		12 Months Ended		Sept. 1985	Dec. 1985	Dec. 1985
				Dec. 1984	Sept. 1985	Dec. 1984	Dec. 1985			
Workers, by bargaining status										
Union.....	123.9	126.5	127.1	1.1	0.8					
Goods-producing <u>3/</u>	122.9	124.6	125.2	1.2	.6					2.6
Service-producing <u>4/</u>	125.6	129.5	130.2	.9	1.2					3.7
Manufacturing.....	123.2	125.0	125.5	1.3	.6					1.9
Nonmanufacturing.....	124.5	127.8	128.6	.7	.9					3.3
Nonunion.....	121.9	126.8	127.5	1.3	1.4					4.6
Goods-producing <u>3/</u>	119.6	124.4	125.1	1.0	.7					4.6
Service-producing <u>4/</u>	123.3	128.3	129.0	1.6	2.0					4.6
Manufacturing.....	120.8	125.7	126.3	1.3	.7					4.6
Nonmanufacturing.....	122.4	127.3	128.1	1.4	1.8					4.7
Workers, by region										
Northeast.....	123.8	128.8	129.9	1.1	1.9					4.9
South.....	122.2	126.5	127.2	1.2	1.0					4.1
Midwest (formerly North Central).....	120.8	124.2	124.6	.9	1.2					3.1
West.....	124.9	129.1	129.8	2.0	.9					3.9
Workers, by area size										
Metropolitan areas.....	123.2	127.3	128.1	1.4	1.3					4.0
Other areas.....	119.8	123.9	123.9	.7	1.1					3.4

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

See footnotes at end of tables.

WAGES AND SALARIES

Table 6. Employment Cost Index for wages and salaries only, private industry workers, 6/ by bargaining status, region, and area size

(Not seasonally adjusted)

Series	Indexes (June 1981=100)			Percent Changes for					
	Dec. 1984	Sept. 1985	Dec. 1985	3 Months Ended			12 Months Ended		
				Dec. 1984	Sept. 1985	Dec. 1985	Dec. 1984	Sept. 1985	Dec. 1985
Workers, by bargaining status									
Union.....	120.9	124.1	124.7	0.9	0.9	0.5	3.4	3.6	3.1
Goods-producing <u>3/</u>	119.3	122.2	122.7	1.0	.7	.4	3.7	3.5	2.9
Service-producing <u>4/</u>	123.5	127.1	127.8	.8	1.1	.6	2.9	3.8	3.5
Nonunion.....	119.5	122.8	123.3	1.2	.9	.4	4.1	4.0	3.2
Manufacturing.....	122.1	125.3	125.9	.7	1.0	.5	2.7	3.3	3.1
Nonmanufacturing.....	120.4	125.2	125.9	1.3	1.5	.6	4.5	5.4	4.6
Goods-producing <u>3/</u>	118.1	122.3	123.0	1.0	.7	.6	3.9	4.6	4.1
Service-producing <u>4/</u>	121.6	126.9	127.7	1.4	2.0	.6	4.8	5.8	5.0
Manufacturing.....	119.5	123.7	124.4	1.4	.7	.6	4.6	4.9	4.1
Nonmanufacturing.....	120.7	125.9	126.6	1.3	1.9	.6	4.4	5.6	4.9
Workers, by region									
Northeast.....	121.9	126.8	128.1	1.2	1.8	1.0	4.5	5.2	5.1
South.....	120.2	124.8	125.4	1.0	1.1	.5	3.9	4.9	4.3
Midwest (formerly North Central).....	118.7	122.5	122.9	.8	1.2	.3	4.5	4.0	3.5
West.....	122.5	126.6	127.1	2.1	1.2	.4	3.4	5.5	3.8
Workers, by area size									
Metropolitan areas.....	121.0	125.5	126.3	1.3	1.4	.6	4.1	5.0	4.4
Other areas.....	118.3	121.9	122.0	.7	1.1	.1	4.3	3.7	3.1

- 1/ The index measures changes in total compensation costs (wages, salaries, and employer costs for employee benefits).
- 2/ Includes private industry and State and local government workers and excludes farm, household, and Federal government workers.
- 3/ Includes mining, construction, and manufacturing.
- 4/ Includes transportation, public utilities, trade, finance, insurance, real estate, and, where applicable, public administration in State and local governments.
- 5/ Consists of legislative, judicial, administrative, and regulatory activities.
- 6/ Excludes farm and household workers.
- 7/ Includes, for example, library, social, and health services.
- 8/ The index measures changes in total compensation costs (wages, salaries, and employer costs for employee benefits). Farm and household workers are excluded.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Employment Cost Index (ECI) is a quarterly measure of the change in the price of labor, free from the influence of employment shifts among occupations and industries. The ECI wage and salary series is limited to changes in wage and salary rates, defined as the hourly straight-time wage rate or, for workers not paid on an hourly basis, earnings divided by the corresponding hours. Straight-time wage and salary rates are total earnings before payroll deductions, excluding premium pay for overtime, work on weekends and holidays, and shift differentials. Production bonuses, incentive earnings, commission payments, and cost-of-living adjustments are included in straight-time wage and salary rates.

The compensation series includes employer costs for employee benefits as well as wages and salaries. Benefits covered by the ECI include:

Paid leave - Paid vacations, paid holidays, paid sick leave, and other paid leave;

Supplemental pay - Premium pay for overtime and work on weekends and holidays, shift differentials, and nonproduction bonuses;

Insurance benefits - Life, health, and sickness and accident insurance;

Retirement and savings benefits - Pension and other retirement plans and savings and thrift plans;

Legally required benefits - Social security, railroad retirement and supplemental retirement, railroad unemployment insurance, Federal and State unemployment insurance, workers' compensation, and other legally required benefits such as State temporary disability insurance; and

Other benefits - Severance pay, supplemental unemployment plans, and merchandise discounts in department stores.

Excluded from both wages and salaries and employee benefits are such items as payments-in-kind, free room and board, and tips.

The ECI collects data for both the private and public sectors, which are published separately and also combined as the total civilian economy. The private sector includes the total private economy, excluding farms and households. The public sector covers State and local governments, but excludes the Federal government.

Each quarter, straight-time average hourly wage and salary rates and benefit cost data (cents-per-hour-worked) are collected from a probability sample of about 12,000 occupations within 2,200 sample establishments in the private sector and about 3,600 occupations within 700 sample establishments in State and local governments.

Occupations were classified according to definitions used in the 1970 Census. Within an establishment, specific job categories are selected to represent broader occupational definitions. The sample establishments were classified in industry categories based on the 1972 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC), as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. Within the private sector sample, establishments are designated by a 2-digit SIC, while in State and local governments, industrial categories vary from a more specific 3-digit SIC such as elementary and secondary schools to a broader major industry division such as public administration. Each establishment is also classified by ownership--State government, local government, or private.

Fixed employment weights from the 1970 Census are used each quarter to calculate the most aggregate indexes--civilian, private, and State and local governments. These fixed weights are also used to derive all of the industry and occupation series indexes. For the series based on bargaining status, region, or area size, however, employment data are not available from the Census. The 1970 employment weights are reallocated within these series each quarter based on the current 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. The June 1985 issue of the Monthly Labor Review contains an article "Introducing new weights for the Employment Cost Index," that describes how 1980 weights will be used in calculating the ECI beginning in June 1986.

Data are collected for the pay period including the 12th day of the survey months of March, June, September, and December. ECI statistics are neither annualized nor adjusted for seasonal influences. For example, the 0.6 percent change in wage and salary rates for "private industry workers" in the 3 months ended December 1985 (table 4) is the actual percent change in straight-time average hourly wage and salary rates from the pay period including the 12th day of September 1985 to the comparable pay period in December 1985.

More detailed information on the ECI is available in several articles and publications. These include a chapter in the BLS Handbook of Methods (Bulletin 2134-1), "The Employment Cost Index." Two articles also appeared in the Monthly Labor Review: "Employment Cost Index: a measure of change in the 'price of labor'," July 1975; and "How benefits will be incorporated into the Employment Cost Index," January 1978. Reprints of these articles plus several other descriptive pieces and a historical listing of ECI data are available upon request. A historical listing of ECI data also appears in the May issue of Current Wage Developments.