

News

United States
Department
of Labor



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EMPLOYMENT COST INDEX - DECEMBER 1997

The Employment Cost Index (ECI) for December 1997 was 135.2 (June 1989=100), an increase of 3.3 percent from December 1996, 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.

Quarterly changes, seasonally adjusted

On a seasonally adjusted basis, compensation costs for civilian workers (private industry plus state and local governments) rose 1.0 percent during the September-December 1997 period; for each of the two previous quarters, the increase was 0.8 percent. Wages and salaries increased 1.1 percent during the September-December 1997 period. The increase was 0.9 percent in the June-September 1997 period. Benefit costs increased 0.9 percent in the September-December period; in the June-September quarter, the increase was 0.4 percent.

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

Compensation Component	Mar. 96	June 96	Sep. 96	Dec. 96	Mar. 97	June 97	Sep. 97	Dec. 97
Civilian workers								
Compensation costs	0.6	0.9	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.8	1.0
Wages and salaries	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.9	1.1
Benefit costs	0.1	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.1	0.6	0.4	0.9
Private industry								
Compensation costs	0.6	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.8	1.2
Wages and salaries	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.2
Benefit costs	0.0	0.7	0.5	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.5	1.1
State and local government								
Compensation costs	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.7
Wages and salaries	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.8
Benefit costs	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.5	0.1	0.2	0.5

Compensation costs for private industry workers increased 1.2 percent during the September-December 1997 period, following gains of 0.8 percent in both September and June. Wages and salaries also rose 1.2 percent, after increases of 0.9 percent in the previous three quarters. Benefit costs increased 1.1 percent; in September, the increase was 0.5 percent. (See tables A and 1.)

BLS is evaluating statistical reliability of ECI series. Some series may be discontinued. See page 3.

Compensation costs for state and local government workers increased 0.7 percent during the September-December 1997 period, following gains of 0.5 percent in each of the previous three quarters. Wages and salaries increased 0.8 percent; in the June-September quarter, the increase was 0.7 percent. Benefits increased 0.5 percent; the previous quarterly increase was 0.2 percent. (See table 1.)

Over-the-year changes, not seasonally adjusted

Compensation costs for civilian workers (not seasonally adjusted) were up 3.3 percent for the year ended December 1997. This compares with increases of 2.9 percent in December 1996 and 2.7 percent in December 1995. Compensation costs in private industry rose 3.4 percent in December 1997, about the same as the 3.1 percent in December 1996 but higher than the December 1995 increase of 2.6 percent. In contrast, compensation costs for state and local governments increased 2.3 percent for the year ended in December 1997. The gain for the year ended in December 1996 was 2.6 percent and in December 1995 the increase was 2.9 percent. (See tables B, 2, and 3.)

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

Compensation component	Dec. 92	Dec. 93	Dec. 94	Dec. 95	Dec. 96	Dec. 97
Civilian workers						
Compensation costs	3.5	3.5	3.0	2.7	2.9	3.3
Wages and salaries	2.7	3.1	2.8	2.9	3.3	3.8
Benefit costs	5.3	4.6	3.4	2.3	2.0	2.1
Private industry						
Compensation costs	3.5	3.6	3.1	2.6	3.1	3.4
Wages and salaries	2.6	3.1	2.8	2.8	3.4	3.9
Benefit costs	5.2	5.0	3.7	2.2	2.0	2.3
State and local government						
Compensation costs	3.7	2.8	3.0	2.9	2.6	2.3
Wages and salaries	3.0	2.7	3.1	3.2	2.8	2.7
Benefit costs	5.4	2.9	2.8	2.6	2.2	1.3

Private industry

In private industry, wages and salaries grew 3.9 percent for the year ended December 1997; up from 2.8 percent in December 1995. The increase for the year ended December 1996 was 3.4 percent. (See tables B and 6.) Benefit costs for private industry workers increased 2.3 percent for the year ended in December 1997, which was about the same as the 2.2 percent increase in December 1995. The increase for the year ended in December 1996 was 2.0 percent. (See chart A and tables B and 8.)

In private industry, over-the-year compensation cost increases were 3.8 percent for white-collar occupations, 2.6 percent for blue-collar occupations, and 4.0 percent for service occupations. Among the occupational groups, increases ranged from 2.2 percent for precision production, craft, and repair occupations to 4.6 percent for executive, administrative, and managerial occupations.

For the year ended December 1997, the 2.4 percent rise in compensation costs in goods-producing industries was lower than the 3.9 percent increase in the service-producing industries. For the year ended December 1996, compensation costs rose 2.8 percent in goods-producing industries and 3.2 percent in service-producing industries. Among industry divisions, over-the-year increases ranged from 2.4 percent in manufacturing to 6.7 percent in finance, insurance, and real estate. (See table 3.)

The over-the-year increases in compensation costs in private industry was 2.1 percent for union workers, lower than the 3.8 percent for nonunion workers. The pattern was similar for service-producing industries where union compensation increased 2.1 percent and nonunion compensation increased 4.2 percent. For goods-producing industries, the increase for union workers was 2.1 percent, and the increase for nonunion workers was 2.6 percent. Compensation in blue-collar occupations increased 2.1 percent for union workers and 2.9 percent for nonunion workers. (See table 4.)

State and local government

In state and local government, the December 1997 over-the-year increase in wages and salaries was less than in private industry. The December 1997 over-the-year increase was 2.7 percent; compared with 2.8 percent for December 1996 and 3.2 percent in December 1995. Benefit costs for December 1997 increased 1.3 percent. In December 1996 the increase was 2.2 percent, and, in December 1995 the increase was 2.6 percent.

The release dates for the Employment Cost Index in 1998 have been changed to the last Thursday of the month following the reference month, as follows:

<u>Reference month</u>	<u>Release date and time</u>
March 1998	April 30, 1998 8:30 AM
June 1998	July 30, 1998 8:30 AM
September 1998	October 29, 1998 8:30 AM
December 1998	January 28, 1999 8:30 AM

The Bureau is evaluating published ECI series to assure that they meet statistical standards for reliability. Preliminary research has targeted 37 series for elimination from the news release. These series are marked with a footnote in the accompanying tables. Series that fail reliability standards will be removed from the news release beginning in September 1998 and will be available only upon request.

BLS Data Available on the World Wide Web and Fax On Demand

ECI data, as well as other data produced by BLS, are now available on the World Wide Web. The ECI home page address is: <http://stats.bls.gov/ecthome.htm>. The BLS home page address is: <http://stats.bls.gov>. To access data using GOPHER or Anonymous FTP, use the Internet address: stats.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.

News releases and other information are available from the BLS fax-on-demand service. To request a document fax, call 202-606-6325. To request a catalog of available documents, select option 2 at the initial voice prompt. To request data found in this news release, enter the following codes:

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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

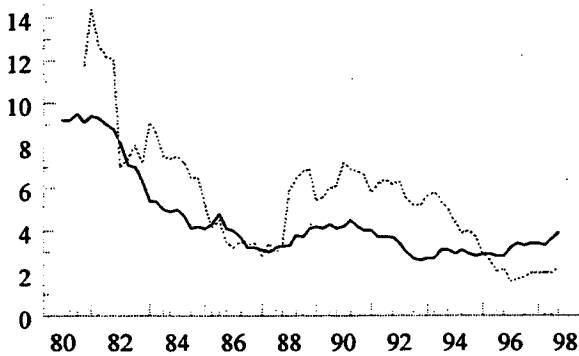


Chart B. Changes in compensation, seasonally adjusted and not seasonally adjusted, private industry

Seasonally adjusted — Not seasonally adjusted - - -

3-month percent change

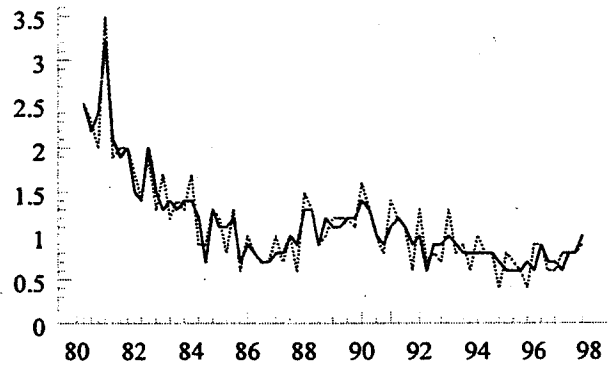


Chart C. Changes in compensation, goods-producing and service-producing sectors, private industry

Goods-producing — Service-producing - - -

12-month percent change

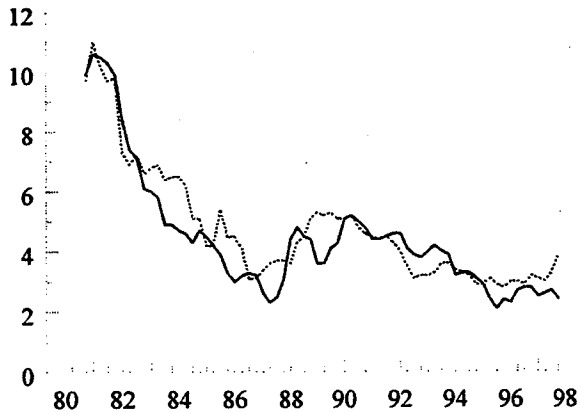


Chart D. Changes in compensation, white-collar and blue-collar occupations, private industry

White-collar — Blue-collar - - -

12-month percent change

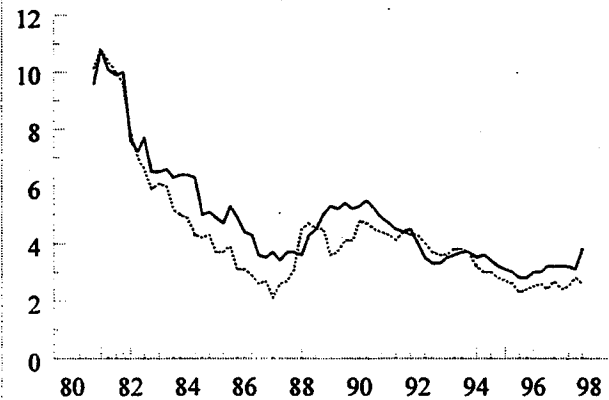


Table 1. SEASONALLY ADJUSTED: Employment Cost Index for total compensation, wages and salaries, and benefit costs, by industry and occupational group

Series	Indexes (June 1989=100)		Percent changes for 3-months ended							
	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	Mar. 1996	June 1996	Sep. 1996	Dec. 1996	Mar. 1996	June 1997	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997
	COMPENSATION									
Civilian workers	133.8	135.2	0.6	0.9	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.8	1.0
State and local government	134.5	135.4	.6	.6	.6	.8	.5	.5	.5	.7
Private industry workers	133.6	135.2	.6	.9	.7	.7	.6	.8	.8	1.2
White-collar occupations	135.1	137.0	.9	.8	.8	.7	.8	.8	.8	1.4
Blue-collar occupations	131.6	132.5	.6	.7	.4	.9	.3	.8	.7	.7
Service occupations	132.8	133.6	.5	.7	.6	.9	.9	.8	1.7	.6
Goods-producing industries ¹	133.7	134.3	.4	.9	.7	.6	.2	1.0	.8	.4
Construction ²	129.4	130.0	.6	.5	.4	.9	.6	.9	.7	.5
Manufacturing	134.6	135.4	.5	.9	.8	.7	.2	.9	.7	.6
Durables	135.0	135.9	.3	1.2	.6	.7	.1	.8	.7	.7
Nondurables	133.9	134.6	.7	.5	1.2	.7	.3	1.0	.8	.5
Service-producing industries ³	133.6	135.6	.8	.8	.7	.8	.8	.7	.9	1.5
Transportation and public utilities	132.9	134.4	.6	.7	.6	1.0	.3	.6	.8	1.1
Wholesale trade ²	134.6	135.2	.6	.9	.7	.8	1.7	.2	.8	.4
Retail trade	130.9	131.9	1.5	-1	1.1	1.3	.9	.6	1.1	.8
Finance, insurance, and real estate ^{2,4}	130.5	134.5	1.1	1.4	.3	-.6	2.1	.6	.9	3.1
Services	136.9	138.7	.8	.8	.7	.8	.7	.9	.9	1.3
Nonmanufacturing industries	133.1	135.0	.7	.8	.7	.9	.7	.8	.8	1.4
WAGES AND SALARIES										
Civilian workers	131.3	132.8	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.9	1.1
State and local government	133.1	134.1	.6	.8	.6	.8	.6	.6	.7	.8
Private industry workers	130.9	132.5	1.0	.9	.7	.8	.9	.9	.9	1.2
White-collar occupations	132.6	134.4	1.1	.9	.8	.8	1.0	.8	1.1	1.4
Blue-collar occupations ⁴	128.3	129.1	.9	1.0	.5	.6	.7	1.0	.8	.6
Service occupations	130.0	130.9	.7	.7	.9	1.0	.9	.9	1.8	.7
Goods-producing industries ^{1,4}	129.9	130.6	.8	1.0	.8	.6	.6	1.1	.8	.5
Construction ²	124.4	125.0	.9	.8	.5	.7	1.2	1.0	.7	.5
Manufacturing ⁴	131.3	132.2	.9	.9	.9	.5	.5	.9	.8	.7
Durables ⁴	131.2	131.9	.6	1.1	.9	.5	.5	.9	.8	.5
Nondurables	131.5	132.8	.9	.5	1.1	.8	.4	.9	.8	1.0
Service-producing industries ³	131.4	133.3	1.1	.8	.7	.9	1.0	.8	1.1	1.4
Transportation and public utilities	130.2	131.3	.6	.5	.7	.8	.9	.6	1.0	.8
Wholesale trade ²	133.1	133.5	.9	.9	.7	.7	1.8	.0	1.0	.3
Retail trade	129.7	130.6	2.1	-1	1.0	1.3	1.3	.8	1.0	.7
Finance, insurance, and real estate ^{2,4}	126.4	130.6	1.2	1.8	.2	.0	1.9	.6	.9	3.3
Services	134.7	136.3	1.0	1.1	.7	.7	.8	1.1	1.2	1.2
Nonmanufacturing industries	130.6	132.3	1.0	.9	.6	1.0	.9	.8	1.1	1.3

See footnotes at end of table.

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

Series	Indexes (June 1989=100)		Percent changes for 3-months ended							
	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	Mar. 1996	June 1996	Sep. 1996	Dec. 1996	Mar. 1996	June 1997	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997
BENEFIT COSTS										
Civilian workers	139.9	141.2	0.1	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.1	0.6	0.4	0.9
State and local government	137.9	138.6	.7	.4	.4	.7	.5	.1	.2	.5
Private industry workers	140.4	141.9	.0	.7	.5	.7	.0	.7	.5	1.1
White-collar occupations	141.9	143.9	.1	.7	.8	.5	.3	.6	.4	1.4
Blue-collar occupations	138.9	139.2	.0	.7	.2	.7	-.1	.7	.7	.2
Service occupations ²	141.6	141.8	-.1	.3	.1	.6	.9	.8	1.5	.1
Goods-producing industries ¹	141.7	142.0	-.2	.8	.4	.9	-.6	.9	.7	.2
Manufacturing	141.7	142.1	-.1	.9	.6	.8	-.6	1.0	.6	.3
Service-producing industries ³	139.6	141.8	.1	.6	.7	.6	.4	.6	.4	1.6
Nonmanufacturing industries	140.0	141.9	.1	.5	.5	.7	.4	.4	.4	1.4

¹ Includes mining, construction, and manufacturing.

² This series may be discontinued with the September 1998 news release.

³ Includes transportation, communication, and public utilities; wholesale and retail

trade; finance, insurance, and real estate; and service industries.

⁴ No identifiable seasonality was found for this series.

Table 2. COMPENSATION (NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED): Employment Cost Index for total compensation, civilian and state and local government workers, by industry and occupational group

Series	Indexes (June 1989=100)			Percent changes for					
	Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	3 months ended			12 months ended		
				Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997
Civilian workers	130.9	134.1	135.2	0.5	1.0	0.8	2.9	3.0	3.3
Excluding sales	131.2	134.2	135.3	.5	.9	.8	2.9	2.8	3.1
Workers by occupational group									
White-collar occupations	131.9	135.2	136.5	.5	1.0	1.0	3.0	3.0	3.5
Excluding sales	132.4	135.6	136.9	.4	1.0	1.0	3.0	2.8	3.4
Professional specialty and technical	133.1	135.8	136.7	.4	.9	.7	2.9	2.4	2.7
Executive, administrative, and managerial	131.5	135.3	137.3	.3	1.0	1.5	3.2	3.2	4.4
Administrative support, including clerical	132.6	135.8	136.9	.5	.9	.8	2.8	2.9	3.2
Blue-collar occupations	129.1	131.8	132.4	.6	.7	.5	2.6	2.7	2.6
Service occupations	131.0	134.6	135.6	1.0	1.4	.7	2.8	3.8	3.5
Workers by industry division									
Goods-producing ¹	130.9	133.6	134.1	.6	.7	.4	2.7	2.7	2.4
Manufacturing	132.1	134.6	135.3	.6	.6	.5	3.0	2.5	2.4
Service-producing ²	130.9	134.2	135.5	.5	1.0	1.0	3.0	3.1	3.5
Services	133.2	136.5	137.6	.5	1.2	.8	2.9	3.0	3.3
Health services	134.4	136.7	137.9	.2	.7	.9	1.8	1.9	2.6
Hospitals	133.8	135.6	136.7	.1	.7	.8	1.8	1.5	2.2
Educational services	133.9	136.5	137.0	.5	1.7	.4	2.8	2.5	2.3
Public administration	131.8	134.1	135.1	.8	.8	.7	2.7	2.6	2.5
Nonmanufacturing	130.5	133.8	135.1	.5	1.0	1.0	2.9	3.1	3.5
State and local government workers	132.7	135.0	135.7	.6	1.3	.5	2.6	2.4	2.3
Workers by occupational group									
White-collar occupations	132.5	134.8	135.5	.5	1.4	.5	2.6	2.3	2.3
Professional specialty and technical	132.3	134.6	135.1	.5	1.6	.4	2.7	2.3	2.1
Executive, administrative, and managerial	132.9	135.6	136.4	.7	.9	.6	2.3	2.7	2.6
Administrative support, including clerical	133.0	135.3	136.1	.9	1.3	.6	3.0	2.7	2.3
Blue-collar occupations	131.2	133.3	134.2	.7	.8	.7	2.5	2.3	2.3
Service occupations	134.5	137.0	137.8	.7	1.0	.6	2.7	2.5	2.5
Workers by industry division									
Services	133.1	135.4	136.0	.5	1.6	.4	2.7	2.3	2.2
Excluding schools ^{3,4}	132.0	134.4	135.3	.1	1.1	.7	2.0	1.9	2.5
Health services	134.1	136.0	137.2	.1	.8	.9	1.9	1.5	2.3
Hospitals	134.3	136.3	137.6	.1	.8	1.0	2.0	1.6	2.5
Educational services	133.0	135.4	135.9	.5	1.7	.4	2.8	2.3	2.2
Schools	133.4	135.7	136.2	.6	1.6	.4	2.8	2.3	2.1
Elementary and secondary	133.1	135.5	135.8	.4	1.7	.2	2.3	2.2	2.0
Colleges and universities	134.0	136.3	137.2	1.1	1.6	.7	4.1	2.9	2.4
Public administration	131.8	134.1	135.1	.8	.8	.7	2.7	2.6	2.5

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 Formerly called hospitals and other services.

⁴ This series may be discontinued with the September 1998 news release.

Table 3. COMPENSATION (NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED): Employment Cost Index for total compensation, private industry workers, by industry and occupational group

Series	Indexes (June 1989=100)			Percent changes for					
	Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	3 months ended			12 months ended		
				Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997
Private industry workers	130.6	133.9	135.1	0.6	0.8	0.9	3.1	3.2	3.4
Excluding sales	130.8	134.1	135.2	.5	.8	.8	2.9	3.0	3.4
White-collar occupations	131.7	135.2	136.7	.5	.8	1.1	3.2	3.1	3.8
Excluding sales	132.5	135.9	137.4	.4	.8	1.1	3.0	3.0	3.7
Professional specialty and technical	133.7	136.7	137.8	.3	.6	.8	2.9	2.6	3.1
Executive, administrative, and managerial	131.3	135.2	137.4	.3	1.0	1.6	3.5	3.3	4.6
Sales ¹	128.1	132.2	133.5	1.1	1.1	1.0	4.0	4.3	4.2
Administrative support, including clerical	132.5	135.9	137.0	.4	.9	.8	2.7	3.0	3.4
Blue-collar occupations	129.0	131.7	132.3	.7	.7	.5	2.7	2.8	2.6
Precision production, craft, and repair	129.1	131.7	131.9	.7	.6	.2	2.7	2.7	2.2
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	129.5	132.2	133.0	.6	.8	.6	2.6	2.7	2.7
Transportation and material moving	125.2	128.0	128.9	.2	.9	.7	1.8	2.5	3.0
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	131.3	134.2	135.8	1.0	.6	1.2	3.5	3.2	3.4
Service occupations	128.9	133.1	134.1	1.2	1.7	.8	3.0	4.5	4.0
Production and nonsupervisory occupations ²	130.0	133.2	134.2	.6	.8	.8	2.9	3.1	3.2
Goods-producing industries ³	130.9	133.6	134.1	.6	.7	.4	2.8	2.7	2.4
Excluding sales	130.5	133.1	133.6	.5	.6	.4	2.8	2.5	2.4
White-collar occupations	132.9	135.6	136.2	.5	.6	.4	3.0	2.6	2.5
Excluding sales	132.1	134.5	135.0	.5	.5	.4	3.0	2.3	2.2
Blue-collar occupations	129.6	132.4	132.8	.5	.8	.3	2.6	2.7	2.5
Construction ¹	126.4	129.7	129.7	.4	.8	.0	2.4	3.0	2.6
Manufacturing	132.1	134.6	135.3	.6	.6	.5	3.0	2.5	2.4
White-collar occupations	133.6	135.8	136.7	.6	.4	.7	3.2	2.3	2.3
Excluding sales	132.5	134.5	135.3	.5	.5	.6	3.3	2.0	2.1
Blue-collar occupations	131.1	133.7	134.3	.7	.7	.4	2.8	2.7	2.4
Durables	132.6	135.0	135.7	.5	.7	.5	2.8	2.4	2.3
Aircraft manufacturing (SIC 3721)	137.4	137.8	136.9	-.6	-.4	-.7	2.7	-.3	-.4
White-collar occupations	133.7	134.6	134.3	-.1	-.2	-.2	3.6	.6	.4
Blue-collar occupations	142.3	141.8	139.6	-1.5	-.7	-1.6	1.3	-1.8	-1.9
Nondurables	131.0	133.7	134.5	.8	.5	.6	3.1	2.8	2.7
Service-producing industries ⁴	130.2	133.8	135.3	.5	1.0	1.1	3.2	3.3	3.9
Excluding sales	130.9	134.5	136.1	.5	.9	1.2	2.9	3.2	4.0
White-collar occupations	131.1	134.9	136.6	.4	.9	1.3	3.1	3.3	4.2
Excluding sales	132.6	136.3	138.1	.3	.9	1.3	3.0	3.1	4.1
Blue-collar occupations	127.3	130.0	130.9	.7	.6	.7	2.7	2.8	2.8
Service occupations	128.6	132.7	133.9	1.2	1.6	.9	3.0	4.4	4.1
Transportation and public utilities	130.4	132.9	134.2	.9	.9	1.0	3.0	2.8	2.9
Transportation ¹	129.2	132.1	133.4	.8	.9	1.0	3.3	3.0	3.3

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 3. COMPENSATION (NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED): Employment Cost Index for total compensation, private industry workers, by industry and occupational group — Continued

Series	Indexes (June 1989=100)			Percent changes for					
	Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	3 months ended			12 months ended		
				Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997
Public utilities	131.7	133.7	135.1	1.0	0.9	1.0	2.5	2.5	2.6
Communications	131.1	131.8	134.0	1.5	1.0	1.7	2.2	2.1	2.2
Electric, gas, and sanitary services	132.4	136.0	136.4	.3	.8	.3	2.9	3.0	3.0
Wholesale and retail trade	128.6	132.4	132.9	.9	.9	.4	3.5	3.8	3.3
Excluding sales	129.0	133.0	134.0	.8	.8	.8	3.2	3.9	3.9
Wholesale trade ¹	130.9	134.6	135.1	.8	.6	.4	3.1	3.6	3.2
Excluding sales ¹	130.9	134.5	135.4	.7	.6	.7	3.0	3.5	3.4
Retail trade	127.4	131.1	131.7	1.0	1.1	.5	3.8	3.9	3.4
General merchandise stores ¹	126.3	128.6	130.0	1.4	.7	1.1	3.8	3.2	2.9
Food stores ¹	128.4	129.8	129.4	1.1	1.2	-.3	4.9	2.2	.8
Finance, insurance, and real estate ¹	126.0	130.5	134.5	-.6	.9	3.1	2.4	3.0	6.7
Excluding sales ¹	129.2	133.5	137.6	-.4	.8	3.1	2.8	2.9	6.5
Banking, savings and loan, and other credit agencies ¹	128.0	133.1	140.6	-1.8	1.1	5.6	2.9	2.1	9.8
Insurance ¹	129.6	133.1	134.8	.2	.8	1.3	2.9	2.9	4.0
Excluding sales ¹	133.5	137.4	138.6	.1	.6	.9	2.5	3.0	3.8
Services	133.4	137.0	138.5	.5	1.0	1.1	3.1	3.2	3.8
Business services ¹	131.8	136.3	138.6	1.2	1.6	1.7	4.4	4.7	5.2
Health services	134.5	137.0	138.1	.2	.8	.8	1.7	2.1	2.7
Hospitals	133.7	135.4	136.5	.2	.7	.8	1.8	1.5	2.1
Nursing homes	-	-	-	.9	.6	.8	2.6	2.7	2.6
Educational services	138.0	141.6	142.6	.4	2.0	.7	3.2	3.0	3.3
Colleges and universities	139.1	142.5	143.7	.4	1.9	.8	2.9	2.8	3.3
Nonmanufacturing industries	129.8	133.3	134.7	.5	.9	1.1	3.1	3.3	3.8
White-collar occupations	131.1	134.9	136.5	.5	1.0	1.2	3.2	3.4	4.1
Excluding sales	132.5	136.2	137.9	.3	.8	1.2	3.0	3.1	4.1
Blue-collar occupations	126.7	129.4	130.1	.6	.6	.5	2.4	2.8	2.7
Service occupations	128.6	132.7	133.8	1.3	1.7	.8	3.1	4.5	4.0

¹ This series may be discontinued with the September 1998 news release.

² This series has the same industry and occupational coverage as the Hourly Earnings Index, which was discontinued in January 1989.

³ Includes mining, construction, and manufacturing.

⁴ Includes transportation, communication, and public utilities; wholesale and retail trade; finance, insurance, and real estate; and service industries.

- Data not available.

Table 4. COMPENSATION (NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED): Employment Cost Index for total compensation, private industry workers, by bargaining status and area size

Series	Indexes (June 1989=100)			Percent changes for					
	Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	3 months ended			12 months ended		
				Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997
Workers by bargaining status:									
Union	130.8	133.2	133.5	0.5	1.1	0.2	2.4	2.4	2.1
Blue-collar occupations	128.9	131.2	131.6	.5	1.0	.3	2.1	2.3	2.1
Goods-producing industries ¹	129.8	132.3	132.5	.5	.8	.2	1.8	2.4	2.1
Service-producing industries ²	131.7	134.0	134.5	.5	1.2	.4	3.0	2.3	2.1
Manufacturing	130.6	133.0	133.3	.6	1.0	.2	2.0	2.5	2.1
Blue-collar occupations	130.1	132.6	133.0	.5	.9	.3	1.8	2.4	2.2
Nonmanufacturing	130.4	132.9	133.2	.4	1.1	.2	2.6	2.3	2.1
Nonunion	130.4	133.9	135.3	.5	.8	1.0	3.1	3.2	3.8
Blue-collar occupations	128.9	131.8	132.6	.9	.5	.6	3.0	3.1	2.9
Goods-producing industries ¹	131.3	134.0	134.7	.7	.6	.5	3.2	2.8	2.6
Service-producing industries ²	129.9	133.7	135.3	.5	.9	1.2	3.1	3.5	4.2
Manufacturing	132.5	135.1	135.9	.6	.5	.6	3.3	2.6	2.6
Blue-collar occupations	131.4	134.2	134.8	.8	.5	.4	3.5	3.0	2.6
Nonmanufacturing	129.6	133.4	134.9	.5	.9	1.1	3.1	3.5	4.1
Workers by region:³									
Northeast	131.1	134.0	135.0	.4	.7	.7	2.6	2.6	3.0
South	129.7	132.5	134.6	.7	.8	1.6	3.3	2.9	3.8
Midwest	132.1	136.2	136.9	.6	1.1	.5	3.0	3.7	3.6
West	128.9	132.5	133.4	.5	.8	.7	3.1	3.3	3.5
Workers by area size:									
Metropolitan areas	130.6	133.9	135.1	.5	.8	.9	3.0	3.0	3.4
Other areas	130.2	133.8	135.3	1.2	1.1	1.1	2.9	4.0	3.9

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 5. WAGES AND SALARIES (NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED): Employment Cost Index for wages and salaries only, civilian and state and local government workers, by industry and occupational group

Series	Indexes (June 1989=100)			Percent changes for					
	Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	3 months ended			12 months ended		
				Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997
Civilian workers	128.0	131.6	132.8	0.6	1.2	0.9	3.3	3.5	3.8
Excluding sales	128.1	131.7	132.8	.5	1.2	.8	3.1	3.3	3.7
Workers by occupational group									
White-collar occupations	129.3	133.0	134.3	.5	1.1	1.0	3.4	3.4	3.9
Excluding sales	129.9	133.5	134.8	.4	1.1	1.0	3.3	3.2	3.8
Professional specialty and technical	130.7	134.0	135.0	.4	1.3	.7	3.0	2.9	3.3
Executive, administrative, and managerial	129.4	133.5	135.6	.3	1.1	1.6	3.8	3.5	4.8
Administrative support, including clerical	129.1	132.7	133.7	.5	1.0	.8	3.1	3.3	3.6
Blue-collar occupations	125.4	128.4	129.3	.7	.7	.7	3.0	3.1	3.1
Service occupations	127.6	131.5	132.6	1.1	1.7	.8	3.4	4.2	3.9
Workers by industry division									
Goods-producing ¹	126.8	129.9	130.6	.6	.8	.5	3.2	3.0	3.0
Manufacturing	128.4	131.3	132.2	.5	.8	.7	3.3	2.8	3.0
Service-producing ²	128.5	132.2	133.6	.6	1.2	1.1	3.4	3.5	4.0
Services	131.1	134.8	136.0	.6	1.4	.9	3.3	3.5	3.7
Health services	131.4	134.3	135.4	.5	.9	.8	2.3	2.7	3.0
Hospitals	130.5	132.5	133.6	.4	.8	.8	2.1	1.9	2.4
Educational services	132.3	135.3	135.9	.5	2.0	.4	3.0	2.8	2.7
Public administration	127.7	130.3	131.4	.9	1.0	.8	2.9	2.9	2.9
Nonmanufacturing	127.8	131.5	132.8	.6	1.2	1.0	3.3	3.5	3.9
State and local government workers	130.9	133.6	134.4	.6	1.6	.6	2.8	2.7	2.7
Workers by occupational group									
White-collar occupations	131.1	133.7	134.5	.6	1.7	.6	2.9	2.6	2.6
Professional specialty and technical	131.7	134.4	135.1	.5	1.8	.5	2.9	2.5	2.6
Executive, administrative, and managerial	130.2	133.1	134.1	.7	1.1	.8	2.6	2.9	3.0
Administrative support, including clerical	129.0	131.4	132.3	1.0	1.5	.7	3.1	2.9	2.6
Blue-collar occupations	128.8	131.2	132.3	.7	1.1	.8	2.5	2.6	2.7
Service occupations	131.0	134.2	135.2	.7	1.4	.7	2.9	3.2	3.2
Workers by industry division									
Services	131.9	134.7	135.3	.5	1.9	.4	2.9	2.7	2.6
Excluding schools ^{3,4}	130.5	133.3	134.4	.3	1.3	.8	2.4	2.5	3.0
Health services	131.4	133.9	135.3	.2	1.0	1.0	2.2	2.1	3.0
Hospitals	131.3	133.7	135.2	.3	1.0	1.1	2.3	2.1	3.0
Educational services	132.0	134.8	135.3	.5	2.0	.4	2.9	2.7	2.5
Schools	132.2	134.9	135.5	.6	2.0	.4	3.0	2.7	2.5
Elementary and secondary	132.4	135.3	135.7	.3	2.0	.3	2.5	2.5	2.5
Colleges and universities	131.2	133.6	134.6	1.1	1.7	.7	4.2	2.9	2.6
Public administration	127.7	130.3	131.4	.9	1.0	.8	2.9	2.9	2.9

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 Formerly called hospitals and other services.

⁴ This series may be discontinued with the September 1998 news release.

Table 6. WAGES AND SALARIES (NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED): Employment Cost Index for wages and salaries only, private industry workers, by industry and occupational group

Series	Indexes (June 1989=100)			Percent changes for					
	Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	3 months ended			12 months ended		
				Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997
Private industry workers	127.3	131.0	132.3	0.6	1.0	1.0	3.4	3.6	3.9
Excluding sales	127.5	131.2	132.4	.6	1.0	.9	3.3	3.5	3.8
White-collar occupations	128.7	132.7	134.2	.5	1.1	1.1	3.5	3.7	4.3
Excluding sales	129.4	133.4	134.8	.3	1.1	1.0	3.4	3.4	4.2
Professional specialty and technical	129.9	133.7	134.8	.2	1.0	.8	3.0	3.2	3.8
Executive, administrative, and managerial	129.3	133.6	135.8	.3	1.1	1.6	3.9	3.6	5.0
Sales ¹	125.9	129.8	131.4	1.6	1.2	1.2	4.6	4.8	4.4
Administrative support, including clerical	129.2	132.9	133.9	.5	.9	.8	3.1	3.4	3.6
Blue-collar occupations	125.1	128.3	129.1	.6	.8	.6	3.0	3.2	3.2
Precision production, craft, and repair	125.1	128.2	128.7	.7	.6	.4	3.0	3.2	2.9
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	126.4	129.5	130.6	.8	.8	.8	3.4	3.3	3.3
Transportation and material moving	121.1	124.1	125.1	.1	.9	.8	2.1	2.6	3.3
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	127.1	130.2	131.8	1.0	.7	1.2	3.7	3.5	3.7
Service occupations	125.7	129.9	131.1	1.3	1.8	.9	3.5	4.7	4.3
Production and nonsupervisory occupations ²	126.5	130.1	131.2	.7	1.0	.8	3.3	3.6	3.7
Goods-producing industries ³	126.8	129.9	130.6	.6	.8	.5	3.2	3.0	3.0
Excluding sales	126.3	129.3	130.0	.5	.8	.5	3.2	2.9	2.9
White-collar occupations	129.1	132.3	132.9	.4	.7	.5	3.0	2.9	2.9
Excluding sales	128.1	130.9	131.6	.3	.7	.5	3.1	2.5	2.7
Blue-collar occupations	125.3	128.4	129.2	.6	.9	.6	3.2	3.1	3.1
Construction ¹	120.8	124.7	124.9	.3	.9	.2	2.9	3.6	3.4
Manufacturing	128.4	131.3	132.2	.5	.8	.7	3.3	2.8	3.0
White-collar occupations	130.1	132.8	133.6	.4	.7	.6	3.2	2.5	2.7
Excluding sales	128.9	131.3	132.2	.4	.6	.7	3.3	2.3	2.6
Blue-collar occupations	127.3	130.2	131.2	.8	.8	.8	3.4	3.1	3.1
Durables	128.4	131.2	131.9	.5	.8	.5	3.3	2.7	2.7
Aircraft manufacturing (SIC 3721)	130.9	133.3	134.0	.2	-.1	.5	2.2	2.1	2.4
White-collar occupations	126.5	129.3	129.8	.3	-.2	.4	2.7	2.5	2.6
Blue-collar occupations	137.1	138.4	139.6	.1	-.3	.9	1.5	1.0	1.8
Nondurables	128.5	131.4	132.6	.7	.6	.9	3.3	3.0	3.2
Service-producing industries ⁴	127.5	131.5	133.1	.6	1.1	1.2	3.5	3.8	4.4
Excluding sales	128.3	132.3	133.9	.5	1.1	1.2	3.3	3.7	4.4
White-collar occupations	128.5	132.6	134.3	.5	1.1	1.3	3.6	3.8	4.5
Excluding sales	129.9	134.2	135.9	.3	1.1	1.3	3.4	3.6	4.6
Blue-collar occupations	124.8	127.9	128.9	.8	.6	.8	2.8	3.3	3.3
Service occupations	125.6	129.8	131.0	1.3	1.8	.9	3.5	4.7	4.3
Transportation and public utilities	127.0	130.1	131.3	.9	1.0	.9	2.7	3.3	3.4
Transportation ¹	124.7	128.5	129.5	.7	1.3	.8	2.5	3.8	3.8

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 6. WAGES AND SALARIES (NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED): Employment Cost Index for wages and salaries only, private industry workers, by industry and occupational group — Continued

Series	Indexes (June 1989=100)			Percent changes for					
	Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	3 months ended			12 months ended		
				Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997
Public utilities	129.8	132.0	133.5	1.1	0.8	1.1	2.9	2.8	2.9
Communications	130.3	131.8	134.0	1.6	.9	1.7	3.2	2.8	2.8
Electric, gas, and sanitary services	129.0	132.2	132.9	.4	.8	.5	2.5	2.9	3.0
Wholesale and retail trade	127.0	130.9	131.6	1.0	.9	.5	3.8	4.1	3.6
Excluding sales	127.7	132.2	133.2	.9	.8	.8	3.7	4.5	4.3
Wholesale trade ¹	129.6	133.0	133.6	.9	.6	.5	3.3	3.5	3.1
Excluding sales ¹	129.8	133.9	135.0	.7	.8	.8	3.3	3.9	4.0
Retail trade	125.8	129.9	130.6	1.1	1.1	.5	4.3	4.4	3.8
General merchandise stores ¹	124.7	126.7	128.4	1.7	.4	1.3	3.8	3.3	3.0
Food stores ¹	124.7	126.7	127.0	1.3	1.6	.2	4.7	2.9	1.8
Finance, insurance, and real estate ¹	122.2	126.4	130.6	.0	.9	3.3	3.2	3.4	6.9
Excluding sales ¹	125.3	129.3	133.6	-6	.9	3.3	3.3	2.6	6.6
Banking, savings and loan, and other credit agencies ¹	123.8	128.9	138.3	-2.4	1.7	7.3	3.1	1.7	11.7
Insurance ¹	126.0	128.7	130.2	.5	.5	1.2	3.1	2.6	3.3
Excluding sales ¹	129.7	132.9	133.7	.3	.5	.6	2.7	2.8	3.1
Services	130.5	134.7	136.2	.6	1.3	1.1	3.6	3.9	4.4
Business services ¹	130.1	134.9	137.3	1.2	1.9	1.8	4.7	5.0	5.5
Health services	131.4	134.3	135.4	.5	.8	.8	2.3	2.7	3.0
Hospitals	130.3	132.2	133.2	.5	.8	.8	2.0	1.9	2.2
Nursing homes	-	-	-	1.0	.8	.8	2.8	3.3	3.1
Educational services	133.8	137.8	138.4	.4	2.2	.4	3.4	3.4	3.4
Colleges and universities	133.8	137.8	138.7	.3	2.1	.7	2.8	3.3	3.7
Nonmanufacturing industries	126.8	130.7	132.1	.7	1.1	1.1	3.5	3.8	4.2
White-collar occupations	128.3	132.4	134.1	.5	1.1	1.3	3.6	3.8	4.5
Excluding sales	129.6	133.8	135.5	.3	1.1	1.3	3.3	3.6	4.6
Blue-collar occupations	123.1	126.4	127.1	.6	.7	.6	2.8	3.3	3.2
Service occupations	125.5	129.7	130.9	1.3	1.8	.9	3.5	4.7	4.3

¹ This series may be discontinued with the September 1998 news release.

² This series has the same industry and occupational coverage as the Hourly Earnings Index, which was discontinued in January 1989.

³ Includes mining, construction, and manufacturing.

⁴ Includes transportation, communication, and public utilities; wholesale and retail trade; finance, insurance, and real estate; and service industries.

- Data not available.

Table 7. WAGES AND SALARIES (NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED): Employment Cost Index for wages and salaries only, private industry workers, by bargaining status and area size

Series	Indexes (June 1989=100)			Percent changes for					
	Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	3 months ended			12 months ended		
				Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997
Workers by bargaining status:									
Union	125.4	128.3	128.9	0.5	1.1	0.5	2.6	2.8	2.8
Blue-collar occupations	123.4	126.0	126.7	.5	1.0	.6	2.6	2.6	2.7
Goods-producing industries ¹	123.6	126.6	127.1	.3	1.0	.4	2.5	2.8	2.8
Service-producing industries ²	127.6	130.4	131.2	.6	1.2	.6	2.7	2.8	2.8
Manufacturing	125.2	127.8	128.6	.6	1.0	.6	2.6	2.7	2.7
Blue-collar occupations	125.0	127.6	128.4	.6	1.1	.6	2.8	2.7	2.7
Nonmanufacturing	125.5	128.6	129.1	.5	1.2	.4	2.6	3.0	2.9
Nonunion	127.7	131.6	133.0	.6	1.0	1.1	3.6	3.7	4.2
Blue-collar occupations	126.3	129.7	130.6	.9	.6	.7	3.4	3.6	3.4
Goods-producing industries ¹	128.0	131.2	132.0	.5	.8	.6	3.4	3.1	3.1
Service-producing industries ²	127.5	131.6	133.2	.7	1.1	1.2	3.7	3.9	4.5
Manufacturing	129.6	132.6	133.5	.6	.7	.7	3.5	3.0	3.0
Blue-collar occupations	128.8	132.0	133.0	.8	.6	.8	3.7	3.3	3.3
Nonmanufacturing	127.0	131.1	132.6	.7	1.1	1.1	3.6	4.0	4.4
Workers by region:³									
Northeast	127.7	130.7	131.6	.6	.7	.7	3.3	2.9	3.1
South	127.0	130.6	133.0	.8	.9	1.8	3.8	3.7	4.7
Midwest	127.7	132.2	133.0	.6	1.4	.6	3.3	4.2	4.2
West	126.5	130.2	131.2	.6	1.0	.8	3.1	3.5	3.7
Workers by area size:									
Metropolitan areas	127.4	131.1	132.3	.6	.9	.9	3.4	3.5	3.8
Other areas	126.5	130.4	132.0	1.2	1.2	1.2	3.3	4.3	4.3

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. BENEFITS (NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED): Employment Cost Index for benefits only, civilian, state and local and private industry workers, by industry and occupational group

Series	Indexes (June 1989=100)			Percent changes for					
	Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	3 months ended			12 months ended		
				Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997	Dec. 1996	Sep. 1997	Dec. 1997
Civilian workers	138.2	140.3	141.1	0.4	0.5	0.6	2.0	1.9	2.1
State and local government workers	136.8	138.2	138.6	.5	.6	.3	2.2	1.5	1.3
Private industry workers	138.6	140.8	141.8	.4	.5	.7	2.0	2.0	2.3
White-collar occupations	139.7	142.0	143.4	.1	.4	1.0	2.2	1.8	2.6
Blue-collar occupations	137.0	138.8	139.0	.6	.6	.1	1.7	1.9	1.5
Service occupations ¹	137.4	141.4	142.0	.9	1.3	.4	1.0	3.8	3.3
Goods-producing industries ²	139.7	141.5	141.5	.6	.4	.0	1.9	1.9	1.3
Service-producing industries ³	137.4	139.8	141.4	.1	.4	1.1	2.0	1.9	2.9
Manufacturing	139.8	141.4	141.7	.7	.3	.2	2.3	1.9	1.4
Aircraft manufacturing (SIC 3721)	151.6	147.6	143.0	-2.1	-8	-3.1	3.8	-4.7	-5.7
White-collar occupations ¹	150.9	146.8	144.8	-.8	-.3	-1.4	5.9	-3.5	-4.0
Blue-collar occupations	152.2	148.2	139.6	-3.9	-1.5	-5.8	.9	-6.4	-8.3
Nonmanufacturing	137.9	140.2	141.5	.3	.5	.9	1.9	2.0	2.6
Union workers	140.7	142.2	142.0	.6	.9	-.1	2.0	1.6	.9
Nonunion workers	137.8	140.2	141.5	.3	.4	.9	2.0	2.0	2.7

¹ This series may be discontinued with the September 1998 news release.

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.

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

EXPLANATORY NOTE

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 overtime, shift differentials, and nonproduction bonuses such as lump-sum payments provided in lieu of wage increases); insurance benefits (life, health, sickness and accident, and long-term disability); retirement and savings benefits (defined benefit and defined contribution); legally required benefits (social security, Federal and State unemployment insurance, workers' compensation, and other legally required benefits such as State temporary disability); and other benefits (severance pay and supplemental unemployment plans).

The ECI provides data for the civilian economy, which includes the total private economy and the public sector--excluding farms, 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 17,000 occupations within about 4,000 sample establishments in private industry and approximately 4,300 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 sample establishments are classified in industry categories based on the 1987 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC); as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

Within an establishment, specific job categories are selected to represent broader occupational definitions. 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. Beginning with March 1995, the jobs are classified according to the 1990 Census, which differs little from the 1980 Census.

Fixed employment weights 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. Beginning in 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," that was published in the June 1995 issue of Compensation and Working Conditions, which is 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 from the Census. 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 spot. 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, so they are not necessarily a weighted average of the component occupation series.

The costs per hour worked of compensation components, based on March 1997 data from the ECI, are published in a separate news release titled "Employer Costs for Employee Compensation - March 1997." A description of the cost levels is provided in the article "Analyzing employers' costs for wages, salaries, and benefits" in the October 1987 issue of the Monthly Labor Review. The cost levels, which are published annually, with March as the reference month, 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. All the statements of comparisons appearing in this publication 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.

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, 1975-95, (Bulletin 2466); 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 bulletin is 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 plus other descriptive pieces and a complete historical listing are available upon request by calling 202/606-6199, sending email to ocltinfo@bls.gov, or visiting the web site at: <http://stats.bls.gov/ecthome.htm>. ECI historical data are also available on data diskettes.

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.