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OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN DENVER-AURORA – MAY 2009

Workers in the Denver-Aurora, Colo., Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of $23.35 during May 2009, significantly higher than the nationwide average of $20.90, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported today. Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that, after testing for statistical significance, 15 occupational groups had wages in the local area that were measurably above their respective national averages, including computer and mathematical science, business and financial operations, and healthcare support. Wages in the local area were significantly lower than their respective national averages in 2 of the 22 major occupational groups – construction and extraction and building and grounds cleaning and maintenance. (For a comprehensive definition of the Denver-Aurora, Colo., Metropolitan Statistical Area, please see Technical Note.)

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Denver-Aurora Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2009

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment			Average hourly wage		
	United States	Denver-Aurora		United States	Denver-Aurora	
All Occupations	100.0%	100.0%		$20.90	$23.35	*
Management	4.7	4.5	*	49.47	53.24	*
Business and financial operations	4.6	7.0	*	31.68	33.29	*
Computer and mathematical science	2.5	4.5	*	36.68	39.32	*
Architecture and engineering	1.8	2.6	*	35.38	38.62	*
Life, physical, and social science	1.0	1.1	*	31.57	34.19	*
Community and social services	1.4	1.2	*	20.55	20.58	
Legal	0.8	1.1	*	46.07	48.33	
Education, training, and library	6.5	5.2	*	23.81	24.37	
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.3	1.9	*	24.87	25.74	
Healthcare practitioner and technical	5.5	4.8	*	33.51	36.08	*
Healthcare support	3.0	2.1	*	12.84	14.78	*
Protective service	2.4	2.1	*	20.07	21.40	
Food preparation and serving related	8.6	8.7		10.04	10.43	*
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.3	3.4		12.00	11.65	*
Personal care and service	2.6	2.8		11.87	12.76	*
Sales and related	10.5	11.3	*	17.32	20.67	*
Office and administrative support	17.1	17.0		15.86	17.60	*
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.1	*	11.53	13.07	*
Construction and extraction	4.4	5.1	*	20.84	20.22	*
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	3.9		20.30	21.54	*
Production	6.8	3.8	*	16.01	16.58	*
Transportation and material moving	6.8	5.9	*	15.47	16.53	*

* The employment share or mean hourly wage for this area is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90 percent confidence interval.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 8 of the 22 occupational groups, including computer and mathematical science, business and financial operations, and architecture and engineering. Conversely, nine groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including healthcare support and production occupations. (See table A and box note at end of release.)

One occupational group, computer and mathematical science, was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Denver had 54,700 jobs in the computer and mathematical science group accounting for 4.5 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the occupational group's 2.5-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for the computer and mathematical science group locally was $39.32, also significantly higher than the national wage of $36.68.

With employment of 12,010, applications computer software engineers were the largest occupation within the computer and mathematical science group, followed by computer systems software engineers (9,600), and computer support specialists (7,270). Four occupations had hourly wages exceeding $40.00, led by computer systems software engineers averaging $45.90. At the lower end of the wage scale were computer support specialists ($25.61). (Detailed occupational data for the computer and mathematical science group are presented in table B; for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to www.bls.gov/oes/2009/may/oes_19740.htm. OES data are published annually for all metropolitan areas. The most recent data for all areas are available at www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcma.htm.)

Table B. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics Survey, for computer and mathematical science occupations, Denver-Aurora Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2009

Occupation	Employment[1]	Mean wages		Median hourly wages
		Hourly	Annual[2]	
Computer and mathematical science occupations	54,700	$39.32	$81,780	$38.61
Computer and information scientists, research	140	44.49	92,540	44.16
Computer programmers	3,260	39.92	83,040	38.66
Computer software engineers, applications	12,010	44.55	92,660	43.98
Computer software engineers, systems software	9,600	45.90	95,470	44.79
Computer support specialists	7,270	25.61	53,270	24.71
Computer systems analysts	6,590	39.57	82,310	38.43
Database administrators	2,220	35.57	73,980	35.18
Network and computer systems administrators	6,130	37.38	77,740	37.10
Network systems and data communications analysts	2,700	39.41	81,970	39.65
Computer specialists, all other	3,860	37.75	78,520	37.36
Actuaries	80	42.03	87,420	40.67
Operations research analysts	670	33.52	69,720	32.42
Statisticians	170	33.91	70,520	32.38

[1] Estimates for detailed occupations do not sum to the totals because the totals include occupations not shown separately. Estimates do not include self-employed workers.

[2] Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by a "year-round, full-time" hours figure of 2,080 hours; for those occupations where there is not an hourly mean wage published, the annual wage has been directly calculated from the reported survey data.

These statistics are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a federal-state cooperative program between BLS and State Workforce Agencies, in this case, the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment. The OES survey provides estimates of employment and hourly and annual wages for wage and salary workers in 22 major occupational groups and up to 801 non-military detailed occupations for the nation, states, metropolitan statistical areas, metropolitan divisions, and nonmetropolitan areas.

OES wage and employment data for the 22 major occupational groups in the Denver-Aurora Metropolitan Statistical Area were compared to their respective national averages based on statistical significance testing. Only those occupations with wages or employment shares above or below the national wage or share after testing for significance at the 90-percent confidence level meet the criteria.

NOTE: A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with the ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.

Technical Note

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey is a semiannual mail survey measuring occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands also are surveyed, but their data are not included in this release. OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Forms are mailed to approximately 200,000 establishments in May and November of each year for a 3-year period. The nationwide response rate for the May 2009 survey was 78.2 percent based on establishments and 74.5 percent based on employment. The survey included establishments sampled in the May 2009, November 2008, May 2008, November 2007, May 2007, and November 2006 semiannual panels. The sample in the Denver-Aurora Metropolitan Statistical Area included 7005 establishments with a response rate of 75 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm.

Metropolitan area definition

The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, dated November 2007.

The Denver-Aurora Metropolitan Statistical Area consists of Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Clear Creek, Denver, Douglas, Elbert, Gilpin, Jefferson, and Park Counties in Colorado.

Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at www.bls.gov/ro7/home.htm. If you have additional questions, contact the Mountain-Plains Economic Analysis and Information Office at 816-285-7000. 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.