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**OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN  
FARGO, N.D. –MINN. MSA — MAY 2011**

Workers in the Fargo Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$18.84 in May 2011, about 13 percent below the nationwide average of \$21.74, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Charlene Peiffer noted that, after testing for statistical significance, 1 of the 22 major occupational groups—farming, fishing, and forestry—had local area wages that were significantly higher than its respective national average. Eighteen groups had significantly lower wages than their respective national averages, including computer and mathematical; arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media; and architecture and engineering occupations.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 5 of the 22 occupational groups, including sales and related; construction and extraction; and personal care and service occupations. Conversely, seven groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including protective service; production; and business and financial operations. (See table A and box note at end of release.)

**Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Fargo Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2011**

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Fargo	United States	Fargo	Percent difference <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Total, all occupations</b>	100.0%	100.0%	\$21.74	\$18.84 *	-13
Management	4.8	4.5 *	51.64	45.11 *	-13
Business and financial operations	4.8	4.0 *	33.05	26.32 *	-20
Computer and mathematical	2.7	3.1 *	37.85	26.46 *	-30
Architecture and engineering	1.8	1.6 *	37.08	28.57 *	-23
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.7 *	32.44	24.48 *	-25
Community and social service	1.5	1.6 *	21.07	19.61 *	-7
Legal	0.8	0.4 *	47.30	42.75 *	-10
Education, training, and library	6.6	5.8 *	24.46	22.90 *	-6
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.3	1.5 *	25.89	17.36 *	-33
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.9	5.9	34.97	31.67 *	-9
Healthcare support	3.1	2.9	13.16	13.42	2
Protective service	2.5	1.2 *	20.54	19.14	-7
Food preparation and serving related	8.7	9.1	10.30	9.94 *	-3
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.3	3.5	12.29	11.57 *	-6
Personal care and service	2.8	3.5 *	11.84	10.87 *	-8
Sales and related	10.6	12.3 *	18.04	15.76 *	-13
Office and administrative support	16.7	16.9	16.40	14.95 *	-9
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.2	11.68	15.38 *	32
Construction and extraction	3.9	4.8 *	21.46	18.54 *	-14
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	3.9	20.86	19.28 *	-8
Production	6.5	5.4 *	16.45	15.45 *	-6
Transportation and material moving	6.7	7.1	15.96	15.28 *	-4

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

<sup>[1]</sup> A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in Fargo is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

One occupational group—construction and extraction—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Fargo had 5,820 jobs in construction and extraction, accounting for 4.8 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 3.9-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$18.54, measurably below the national wage of \$21.46.

With employment of 810, construction laborers was the largest occupation within the construction and extraction group, followed by electricians (630) and carpenters (620). Among the higher paying jobs were first-line supervisors of construction trades and extraction workers; and brickmasons and blockmasons, with mean hourly wages of \$26.77 and \$25.92, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were construction laborers (\$13.66) and roofers (\$14.48). (Detailed occupational data for construction and extraction are presented in table 1; for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_22020.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_22020.htm))

Location quotients allow for the exploration of an area's occupational make-up by comparing the composition of jobs in an area relative to the national average. (See table 1.) For example, a location quotient of 2.0 indicates that an occupation accounts for twice the share of employment in the area than it does nationally. In the Fargo Metropolitan Statistical Area, above average concentrations of employment were found in many of the occupations within the construction and extraction group. For instance, cement masons and concrete finishers were employed at 4.1 times the national rate in Fargo, and sheet metal workers, at 3.4 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, construction and maintenance painters had a location quotient of 1.0 in Fargo, indicating that this particular occupation's local and national employment shares were similar.

These statistics are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a federal-state cooperative program between BLS and State Workforce Agencies, in this case, Job Service North Dakota and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. The OES survey provides estimates of employment and hourly and annual wages for wage and salary workers in 22 major occupational groups and nearly 800 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 Fargo 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 the national estimates. 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 2011 survey was 77.3 percent based on establishments and 73.3 percent based on employment. May 2011 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2011, November 2010, May 2010, November 2009, May 2009, and November 2008. The sample in the Fargo Metropolitan Statistical Area included 1,883 establishments with a response rate of 78 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to [www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm).

The May 2011 OES estimates mark the first set of estimates based in part on data collected using the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system. Nearly all the occupations in this release are 2010 SOC occupations; however, some are not. The May 2012 OES data will reflect the full set of detailed occupations in the 2010 SOC. For a list of all occupations, including 2010 SOC occupations, and how data collected on two structures were combined, see the OES Frequently Asked Questions online at [www.bls.gov/oes/oes\\_ques.htm#Ques41](http://www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm#Ques41).

### Area definitions

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

The **Fargo, N.D. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Cass County of North Dakota and Clay County of Minnesota.

### Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at [www.bls.gov/ro5/home.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ro5/home.htm). If you have additional questions, contact the Chicago Economic Analysis and Information Unit at (312) 353-1880. 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.

**Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Fargo Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2011**

Occupation <sup>[1]</sup>	Employment		Mean Wages	
	Level <sup>[2]</sup>	Location quotient <sup>[3]</sup>	Hourly	Annual <sup>[4]</sup>
Construction and extraction occupations	5,820	1.3	\$18.54	\$38,570
First-line supervisors of construction trades and extraction workers	480	1.1	26.77	55,690
Brickmasons and blockmasons	50	0.8	25.92	53,920
Carpenters	620	1.1	17.33	36,050
Carpet installers	[5]	[5]	15.97	33,210
Cement masons and concrete finishers	520	4.1	16.54	34,410
Construction laborers	810	1.1	13.66	28,420
Paving, surfacing, and tamping equipment operators	100	1.9	16.81	34,970
Operating engineers and other construction equipment operators	480	1.5	20.12	41,850
Drywall and ceiling tile installers	80	1.2	19.36	40,260
Electricians	630	1.3	19.52	40,600
Insulation workers, floor, ceiling, and wall	60	2.8	17.12	35,610
Painters, construction and maintenance	180	1.0	15.98	33,240
Pipelayers	60	1.5	18.83	39,160
Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	340	1.0	23.04	47,920
Roofers	110	1.2	14.48	30,120
Sheet metal workers	410	3.4	16.74	34,810
Structural iron and steel workers	130	2.5	17.89	37,210
Helpers--brickmasons, blockmasons, stonemasons, and tile and marble setters	40	1.6	14.85	30,890
Helpers, construction trades, all other	40	2.2	11.53	23,980
Construction and building inspectors	50	0.5	23.98	49,870
Highway maintenance workers	170	1.3	19.86	41,310

[1] For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in Fargo, see [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_22020.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_22020.htm).

[2] 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.

[3] The location quotient is the ratio of the area concentration of occupational employment to the national average concentration. A location quotient greater than one indicates the occupation has a higher share of employment than average, and a location quotient less than one indicates the occupation is less prevalent in the area than average.

[4] 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.

[5] Estimate not released.