

SOUTHWEST INFORMATION OFFICE
Dallas, Texas

For release: Thursday, July 5, 2012

12-1365-DAL

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OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN LAS CRUCES, MAY 2011

Workers in the Las Cruces Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$18.59 in May 2011, about 14 percent below the nationwide average of \$21.74, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were significantly lower than their respective national averages in 17 of 22 major groups including legal, sales and related, and construction and extraction. Wages were measurably higher than their respective national averages in only one group, education, training, and library.

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

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Las Cruces	United States	Las Cruces	Percent difference ¹
Total, all occupations	100.0%	100.0%	\$21.74	\$18.59 *	-14
Management	4.8	4.2 *	51.64	37.24 *	-28
Business and financial operations	4.8	3.6 *	33.05	25.11 *	-24
Computer and mathematical	2.7	1.9 *	37.85	34.15 *	-10
Architecture and engineering	1.8	3.0 *	37.08	35.78	-4
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	1.2 *	32.44	29.43 *	-9
Community and social service	1.5	2.2 *	21.07	19.39 *	-8
Legal	0.8	0.6 *	47.30	28.38 *	-40
Education, training, and library	6.6	9.2 *	24.46	27.19 *	11
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.3	0.8 *	25.89	16.95 *	-35
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.9	5.9	34.97	34.51	-1
Healthcare support	3.1	3.0	13.16	11.81 *	-10
Protective service	2.5	4.8 *	20.54	21.83	6
Food preparation and serving related	8.7	9.2	10.30	9.35 *	-9
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.3	3.7	12.29	10.42 *	-15
Personal care and service	2.8	4.5 *	11.84	9.77 *	-17
Sales and related	10.6	9.2 *	18.04	12.45 *	-31
Office and administrative support	16.7	16.2	16.40	12.97 *	-21
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	1.5 *	11.68	9.57 *	-18
Construction and extraction	3.9	5.2 *	21.46	15.45 *	-28
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	3.0 *	20.86	16.95 *	-19
Production	6.5	3.7 *	16.45	14.95	-9
Transportation and material moving	6.7	3.3 *	15.96	12.36 *	-23

* 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.

¹ A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in Las Cruces is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 8 of the 22 occupational groups, including education, training, and library; protective service; and construction and extraction. Conversely, nine groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including transportation and material moving, production, and sales and related. (See table A and box note at end of release.)

One occupational group—architecture and engineering—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Las Cruces had 1,980 jobs in architecture and engineering, accounting for 3.0 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 1.8-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$35.78 compared to the national wage of \$37.08.

With employment of 360, aerospace engineers was the largest occupation within the architecture and engineering group, followed by electronics engineers—excluding computer, (280). Among the higher paying jobs were electronics engineers—excluding computer and aerospace engineers, with mean hourly wages of \$42.43 and \$41.90, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were architectural and civil drafters (\$16.48) and surveying and mapping technicians (\$17.75). (Detailed data for architecture and engineering workers are presented in table 1; for a complete listing of all available occupations, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_29740.htm.)

Location quotients allow us to explore the occupational make-up of a metropolitan area 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 Las Cruces Metropolitan Statistical Area, above average concentrations of employment were found in many of the occupations within the architecture and engineering group. For instance, aerospace engineers were employed at 8.7 times the national rate in Las Cruces, and electrical and electronics engineering technicians, at 2.8 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, electrical engineers had a location quotient of 0.9 in Las Cruces, 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, the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions. 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 Las Cruces 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 Las Cruces Metropolitan Statistical Area included 964 establishments with a response rate of 89 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, see 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.

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.

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 **Las Cruces Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)** includes Doña Ana County in New Mexico.

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

Occupation ¹	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ²	Location quotient ³	Hourly	Annual ⁴
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	1,980	1.7	\$35.78	74,420
Architects, except landscape and naval	30	0.8	32.42	67,430
Aerospace engineers	360	8.7	41.90	87,160
Civil engineers	70	0.5	35.30	73,430
Electrical engineers	70	0.9	36.24	75,380
Electronics engineers, except computer	280	3.9	42.43	88,240
Industrial engineers	70	0.6	[5]	[5]
Mechanical engineers	60	0.5	36.47	75,860
Engineers, all other	240	3.8	41.15	85,590
Architectural and civil drafters	40	1.0	16.48	34,280
Civil engineering technicians	60	1.6	21.61	44,960
Electrical and electronics engineering technicians	220	2.8	30.27	62,970
Environmental engineering technicians	[5]	[5]	27.96	58,160
Engineering technicians, except drafters, all other	100	3.1	29.24	60,810
Surveying and mapping technicians	30	1.3	17.75	36,920

¹ For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in the Las Cruces MSA, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_29740.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 Estimates not available.