

News

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FOR RELEASE:
September 22, 2009

OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN WICHITA: MAY 2008

Workers in the Wichita, Kan. Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$18.44 during May 2008, roughly 9 percent below the nationwide average of \$20.32, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor. Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that after testing for statistical significance, only one group—production—had wages in the local area that were measurably above the corresponding national average. Wages in the local area were significantly lower than their respective national averages in 19 of the 22 major occupational groups, including management, computer and mathematical science, and legal. (For a comprehensive definition of the Wichita, Kan. Metropolitan Statistical Area, please see Technical Note.)

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 4 of the 22 occupational groups including production, construction and extraction, and architecture and engineering. Conversely, 13 groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including transportation and material moving and office and administrative support occupations. (See table A and box note at end of release.)

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Wichita Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2008

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Average hourly wage		
	United States	Wichita	United States	Wichita	
Total, all occupations	100.0%	100.0%	\$20.32	\$18.44	*
Management	4.6	4.3	48.23	40.91	*
Business and financial operations	4.5	4.0	31.12	26.70	*
Computer and mathematical science	2.4	1.7	35.82	27.90	*
Architecture and engineering	1.9	3.5	34.34	32.58	*
Life, physical, and social science	1.0	0.5	30.90	25.68	*
Community and social services	1.4	1.3	20.09	18.18	*
Legal	0.7	0.4	44.36	37.69	*
Education, training, and library	6.3	5.8	23.30	20.34	*
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.3	1.2	24.36	18.15	*
Healthcare practitioner and technical	5.2	4.9	32.64	29.98	*
Healthcare support	2.8	2.8	12.66	11.33	*
Protective service	2.3	1.8	19.33	16.90	*
Food preparation and serving related	8.5	8.1	9.72	8.42	*
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.3	3.1	11.72	11.05	*
Personal care and service	2.5	2.8	11.59	9.80	*
Sales and related	10.6	9.4	17.35	15.44	*
Office and administrative support	17.2	16.5	15.49	14.29	*
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.1	11.32	10.99	*
Construction and extraction	4.8	5.5	20.36	17.53	*
Installation, maintenance, and repair	4.0	4.6	19.82	20.42	*
Production	7.3	11.8	15.54	17.86	*
Transportation and material moving	7.0	5.9	15.12	14.40	*

* 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 level.

One occupational group, production, was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Wichita had 35,730 production jobs accounting for 11.8 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the occupational group's 7.3-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for the production group locally was \$17.86, measurably above the national wage of \$15.54.

With employment of 5,450, aircraft structure, surfaces, rigging, and systems assemblers were the largest occupation within the production group, followed by team assemblers (3,830), and first-line supervisors/managers of production and operating workers (3,000). Four occupations had hourly wages exceeding \$25.00 led by first-line supervisors/managers of production and operating workers, averaging \$26.88, and by numerical tool and process control programmers at \$25.58. At the lower end of the wage scale were pressers, textile, garment, and related materials (\$8.08) and laundry and dry-cleaning workers (\$8.62). (Detailed occupational data for the production group are presented in table B; for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to http://www.bls.gov/oes/2008/may/oes_48620.htm.)

Table B. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, for production occupations, Wichita Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2008

Occupation	Employment [1]	Mean wages		Median hourly wages
		Hourly	Annual[2]	
Production occupations	35,730	\$17.86	\$37,150	\$17.10
First-line supervisors/managers of production and operating workers	3,000	26.88	55,920	26.52
Aircraft structure, surfaces, rigging, and systems assemblers	5,450	20.41	42,450	19.99
Coil winders, tapers, and finishers	120	15.21	31,630	12.49
Electrical and electronic equipment assemblers	1,410	19.24	40,020	19.96
Electromechanical equipment assemblers	70	13.88	28,870	13.35
Structural metal fabricators and fitters	430	18.21	37,870	16.59
Fiberglass laminators and fabricators	190	17.79	37,000	18.01
Team assemblers	3,830	13.82	28,750	13.38
Assemblers and fabricators, all other	290	18.45	38,380	18.48
Bakers	220	9.16	19,050	8.84
Butchers and meat cutters	200	13.67	28,430	15.53
Food and tobacco roasting, baking, and drying machine operators and tenders	[3]	12.71	26,430	11.34
Food batchmakers	220	11.62	24,170	11.60
Computer-controlled machine tool operators, metal and plastic	1,180	18.53	38,530	17.45
Numerical tool and process control programmers	160	25.58	53,210	26.08
Extruding and drawing machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	450	14.70	30,580	13.93
Forging machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	[3]	16.64	34,620	14.84
Rolling machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	30	17.49	36,380	17.58
Cutting, punching, and press machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	790	15.28	31,790	14.09
Drilling and boring machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	170	16.37	34,060	15.20
Grinding, lapping, polishing, and buffing machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	410	15.13	31,470	13.38
Lathe and turning machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	140	17.02	35,400	16.45
Milling and planing machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	430	16.60	34,530	16.22
Machinists	1,460	16.53	34,380	15.88
Patternmakers, metal and plastic	120	25.33	52,700	26.69
Foundry mold and coremakers	80	12.01	24,970	11.59
Molding, coremaking, and casting machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	240	11.54	23,990	10.77
Multiple machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	120	16.59	34,510	11.78
Tool and die makers	560	25.21	52,450	26.91
Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers	1,410	16.83	35,000	16.13
Welding, soldering, and brazing machine setters, operators, and tenders	240	20.08	41,760	21.37
Heat treating equipment setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	290	20.48	42,600	21.51
Plating and coating machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	180	14.87	30,930	14.02
Tool grinders, filers, and sharpeners	40	21.51	44,750	22.57
Metal workers and plastic workers, all other	80	18.25	37,950	17.93
Bindery workers	120	11.75	24,440	12.17
Job printers	90	16.14	33,560	16.58
Prepress technicians and workers	90	16.54	34,390	16.20
Printing machine operators	350	18.99	39,500	19.53
Laundry and dry-cleaning workers	370	8.62	17,940	8.55
Pressers, textile, garment, and related materials	160	8.08	16,800	8.07
Sewing machine operators	510	10.39	21,620	8.67
Tailors, dressmakers, and custom sewers	90	9.25	19,240	7.69
Upholsterers	270	19.48	40,520	19.82
Cabinetmakers and bench carpenters	220	14.78	30,740	14.39
Sawing machine setters, operators, and tenders, wood	170	10.88	22,640	10.19
Woodworking machine setters, operators, and tenders, except sawing	[3]	12.66	26,330	11.98
Power plant operators	50	16.70	34,730	14.70
Water and liquid waste treatment plant and system operators	120	16.60	34,540	16.06
Chemical equipment operators and tenders	360	22.71	47,230	22.95
Crushing, grinding, and polishing machine setters, operators, and tenders	[3]	13.60	28,280	12.92
Grinding and polishing workers, hand	300	12.46	25,920	11.22
Mixing and blending machine setters, operators, and tenders	220	15.47	32,180	13.80
Cutters and trimmers, hand	60	11.77	24,480	11.31
Cutting and slicing machine setters, operators, and tenders	170	22.45	46,690	23.94
Extruding, forming, pressing, and compacting machine setters, operators, and tenders	70	13.81	28,730	13.04
Furnace, kiln, oven, drier, and kettle operators and tenders	30	17.91	37,240	18.14
Inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers	2,160	21.01	43,710	21.54
Dental laboratory technicians	90	14.24	29,630	14.16
Ophthalmic laboratory technicians	70	13.90	28,910	13.09
Packaging and filling machine operators and tenders	660	11.87	24,690	12.13
Coating, painting, and spraying machine setters, operators, and tenders	480	14.01	29,140	13.35
Painters, transportation equipment	510	23.77	49,430	24.50
Painting, coating, and decorating workers	150	12.59	26,180	11.72
Photographic processing machine operators	100	9.31	19,360	9.11
Molders, shapers, and casters, except metal and plastic	[3]	13.76	28,610	12.83
Helpers--production workers	1,190	11.68	24,300	10.78
Production workers, all other	360	18.53	38,540	18.16

[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.

[3] Estimate not released.

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 Kansas Department of Labor. 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 Wichita 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 2008 survey was 78.2 percent based on establishments and 74.3 percent based on employment. The survey included establishments sampled in the May 2008, November 2007, May 2007, November 2006, May 2006, and November 2005 semiannual panels. The sample in the Wichita Metropolitan Statistical Area included 2,870 establishments with a response rate of 78 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm>.

Effective with this news release, the Occupational Employment Statistics program has switched the basis for their industry classification from the 2002 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) to the 2007 NAICS. Historical data were not revised.

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 December 2005.

Wichita Metropolitan Statistical Area consists of Butler, Harvey, Sedgwick, and Sumner Counties in Kansas.

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.