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## **OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN BIRMINGHAM-HOOVER, MAY 2011**

Workers in the Birmingham-Hoover Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$20.04 in May 2011, about 8 percent below the nationwide average of \$21.74, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were significantly lower than their respective national averages in 17 of the 22 major occupational groups, including construction and extraction, personal care and service, and healthcare practitioners and technical.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 6 of the 22 occupational groups, including sales and related, healthcare practitioners and technical, and office and administrative support. Conversely, 13 groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including food preparation and serving related; education, training, and library; and business and financial operations. (See table A and box note at end of release.)

One occupational group—sales and related—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Birmingham-Hoover had 60,840 jobs in sales and related, accounting for 12.8 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 10.6-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$17.08, measurably below the national wage of \$18.04.

With employment of 15,790, retail salespersons was the largest occupation within the sales and related group, followed by cashiers (15,210) and wholesale and manufacturing sales representatives, except technical and scientific products (10,880). Among the higher paying jobs were securities, commodities, and financial services sales agents and first-line supervisors of non-retail sales workers, with mean hourly wages of \$43.89 and \$34.26, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were cashiers (\$9.05) and retail sales persons (\$12.09). (Detailed occupational data for sales and related are presented in table 1; for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_13820.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_13820.htm))

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

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Birmingham	United States	Birmingham	Percent difference <sup>1</sup>
<b>Total, all occupations</b>	100.0%	100.0%	\$21.74	\$20.04 *	-8
Management	4.8	4.2 *	51.64	51.73	0
Business and financial operations	4.8	3.9 *	33.05	30.99 *	-6
Computer and mathematical	2.7	2.2 *	37.85	33.73 *	-11
Architecture and engineering	1.8	1.4 *	37.08	32.14 *	-13
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.5 *	32.44	27.13 *	-16
Community and social service	1.5	0.8 *	21.07	20.91	-1
Legal	0.8	0.8	47.30	44.31	-6
Education, training, and library	6.6	5.3 *	24.46	24.48	0
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.3	1.1 *	25.89	18.33 *	-29
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.9	7.8 *	34.97	30.00 *	-14
Healthcare support	3.1	2.7 *	13.16	12.17 *	-8
Protective service	2.5	2.8 *	20.54	16.75 *	-18
Food preparation and serving related	8.7	7.3 *	10.30	9.60 *	-7
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.3	2.9 *	12.29	10.85 *	-12
Personal care and service	2.8	2.5	11.84	10.07 *	-15
Sales and related	10.6	12.8 *	18.04	17.08 *	-5
Office and administrative support	16.7	18.5 *	16.40	15.75 *	-4
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.1 *	11.68	15.33 *	31
Construction and extraction	3.9	4.4 *	21.46	17.99 *	-16
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	4.9 *	20.86	20.11 *	-4
Production	6.5	5.9 *	16.45	15.90 *	-3
Transportation and material moving	6.7	7.1	15.96	14.53 *	-9

\* 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 Birmingham is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

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 Birmingham-Hoover Metropolitan Statistical Area, above average concentrations of employment were found in some of the occupations within the sales and related group. For instance, wholesale and manufacturing sales representatives, except technical and scientific products were employed at 2.1 times the national rate in Birmingham, and insurance sales agents, at 1.8 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, retail salespersons had a location quotient of 1.0 in Birmingham, 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 Alabama Department of Industrial Relations. 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 Birmingham 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 Birmingham-Hoover Metropolitan Statistical Area included 3,579 establishments with a response rate of 79 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 **Birmingham-Hoover, Ala. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Bibb, Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, and Walker Counties.

### **Additional information**

OES data are available on our regional web page at [www.bls.gov/ro4/home.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ro4/home.htm). If you have additional questions, contact the Southeast Economic Analysis and Information Unit at (404) 893-4222. 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, Birmingham-Hoover 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>
Sales and related occupations	60,840	1.2	\$17.08	\$35,540
First-line supervisors of retail sales workers	6,590	1.5	18.30	38,060
First-line supervisors of non-retail sales workers	1,370	1.6	34.26	71,250
Cashiers	15,210	1.2	9.05	18,830
Counter and rental clerks	2,400	1.5	11.39	23,700
Parts salespersons	870	1.1	15.06	31,330
Retail salespersons	15,790	1.0	12.09	25,150
Advertising sales agents	450	0.8	24.96	51,930
Insurance sales agents	2,090	1.8	26.96	56,080
Securities, commodities, and financial services sales agents	770	0.7	43.89	91,300
Travel agents	160	0.6	20.42	42,470
Sales representatives, services, all other	1,850	0.8	22.13	46,030
Sales representatives, wholesale and manufacturing, technical and scientific products	470	0.3	32.91	68,450
Sales representatives, wholesale and manufacturing, except technical and scientific products	10,880	2.1	27.42	57,040
Demonstrators and product promoters	(5)	(5)	13.29	27,650
Real estate brokers	100	0.7	36.93	76,810
Real estate sales agents	630	1.1	32.61	67,830
Sales engineers	100	0.4	38.99	81,100
Telemarketers	730	0.8	13.27	27,600
Sales and related workers, all other	270	0.4	15.64	32,530

(1) For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in Birmingham-Hoover, see [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_13820.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_13820.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.