



NEWS RELEASE



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OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES FOR SELECTED ENGINEERING OCCUPATIONS IN ALABAMA'S METROPOLITAN AREAS – MAY 2010

Among the 12 metropolitan areas in Alabama in May 2010, Huntsville was the only area to have annual wages significantly above the national average for both industrial and mechanical engineers, while Decatur registered an above-average wage for industrial engineers, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. None of Alabama's metropolitan areas recorded an above-average wage for civil engineers. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that there were two areas with wages falling significantly below those for the nation in all three selected occupations. Nationwide, mechanical engineers earned an average (mean) wage of \$82,840, civil engineers, \$82,280, and industrial engineers, \$78,450. (See table A. For comprehensive definitions of metropolitan areas in Alabama, please see Technical Note.)

Table A. Average (mean) annual wages for selected engineering occupations in the United States and metropolitan areas in Alabama, May 2010

Area	Civil engineers	Industrial engineers	Mechanical engineers
United States	\$82,280	\$78,450	\$82,480
Alabama	76,890 *	75,750 *	80,150 *
Anniston-Oxford	--	70,050 *	78,180
Auburn-Opelika	54,050 *	77,310	70,340 *
Birmingham-Hoover	74,010 *	71,830 *	78,040 *
Columbus, Ga.-Ala.	72,150 *	78,250	72,360 *
Decatur	67,780 *	86,880 *	83,110
Dothan	74,250 *	--	--
Florence-Muscle Shoals	91,860	78,830	81,050
Gadsden	--	73,580	--
Huntsville	98,230	85,090 *	85,620 *
Mobile	76,810 *	75,020	76,580 *
Montgomery	67,970 *	72,900 *	67,680 *
Tuscaloosa	67,720 *	68,110 *	87,740

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

-- Estimate not released.

Of the 12 metropolitan areas located entirely or partially in the State, Huntsville had the largest number of mechanical engineers (1,340) and civil and industrial engineers (880 each). Together, these three occupations in Huntsville accounted for roughly 31 percent of Alabama’s employment in the selected occupations. Birmingham-Hoover had 1,700 civil, industrial, and mechanical engineers combined, about 17 percent of those in the State. Montgomery (920) and Mobile (780) were the only other metropolitan areas where combined employment in the three selected occupations exceeded 500. (See table B.)

Table B. Employment for selected engineering occupations in the United States and metropolitan areas in Alabama, May 2010

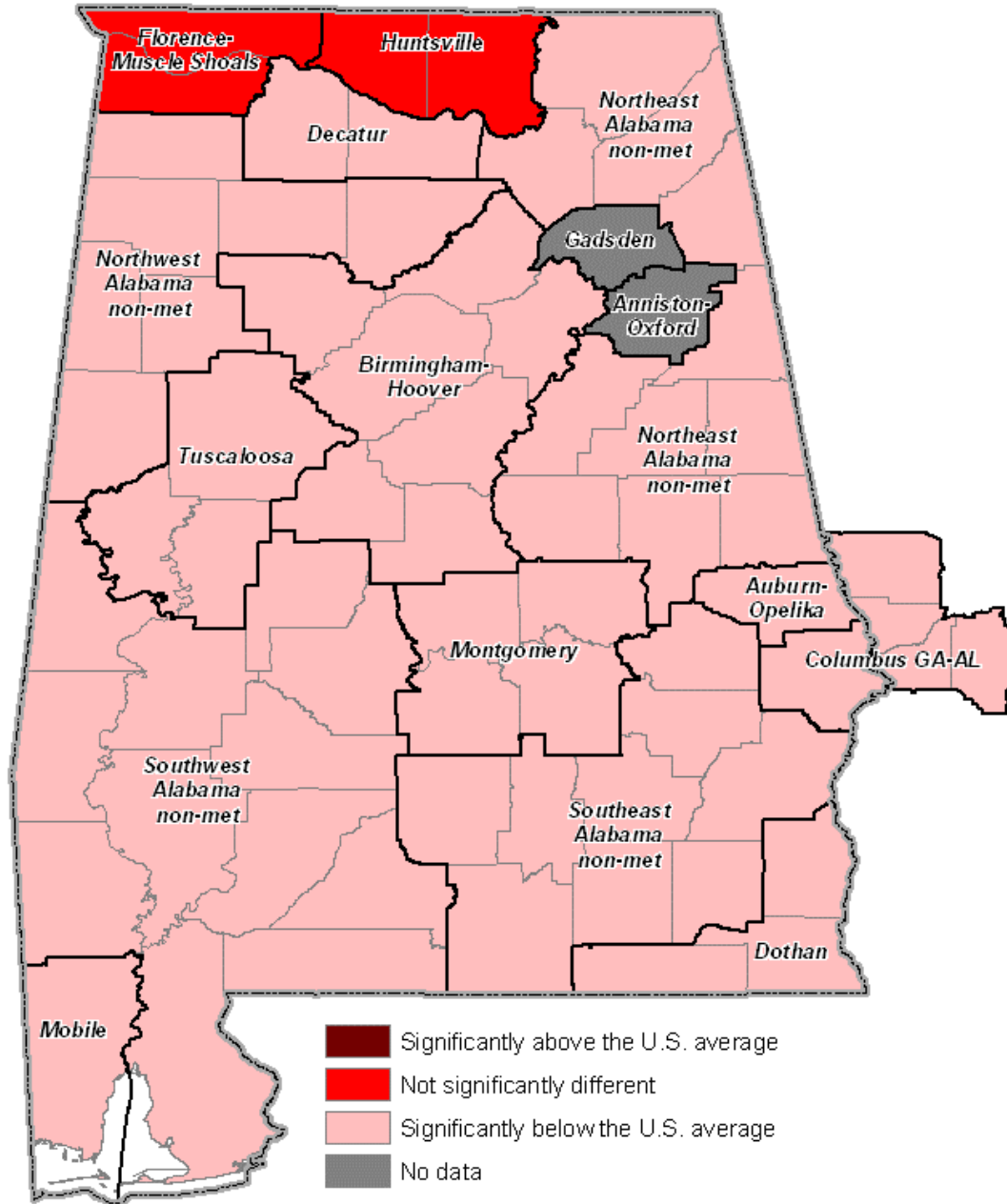
Area	Civil engineers	Industrial engineers	Mechanical engineers
United States	249,120	202,990	234,400
Alabama	3,730	3,190	3,160
Anniston-Oxford	--	100	60
Auburn-Opelika	70	80	80
Birmingham-Hoover	680	480	540
Columbus, Ga.-Ala.	190	180	30
Decatur	60	140	200
Dothan	70	--	--
Florence-Muscle Shoals	100	80	80
Gadsden	--	70	--
Huntsville	880	880	1,340
Mobile	420	140	220
Montgomery	580	170	170
Tuscaloosa	170	90	80

-- Estimate not released.

Wages for civil engineers in metropolitan areas in Alabama

Huntsville was the highest-paying metropolitan area in Alabama for civil engineers at \$98,230, followed by Florence-Muscle Shoals (\$91,860); both were not measurably different than the national average for this occupation. Eight metropolitan areas in the State had significantly lower wages than the nation for civil engineers. Among these areas, Auburn-Opelika (\$54,050) registered the lowest wage in this occupation, more than \$28,000 below the U.S. average. The metropolitan areas with wages close to the national average for civil engineers were located in the northern tier of Alabama while lower wage metropolitan areas were spread geographically throughout the State. (See chart 1.)

Chart 1. Mean annual wages for civil engineers by area, Alabama, May 2010

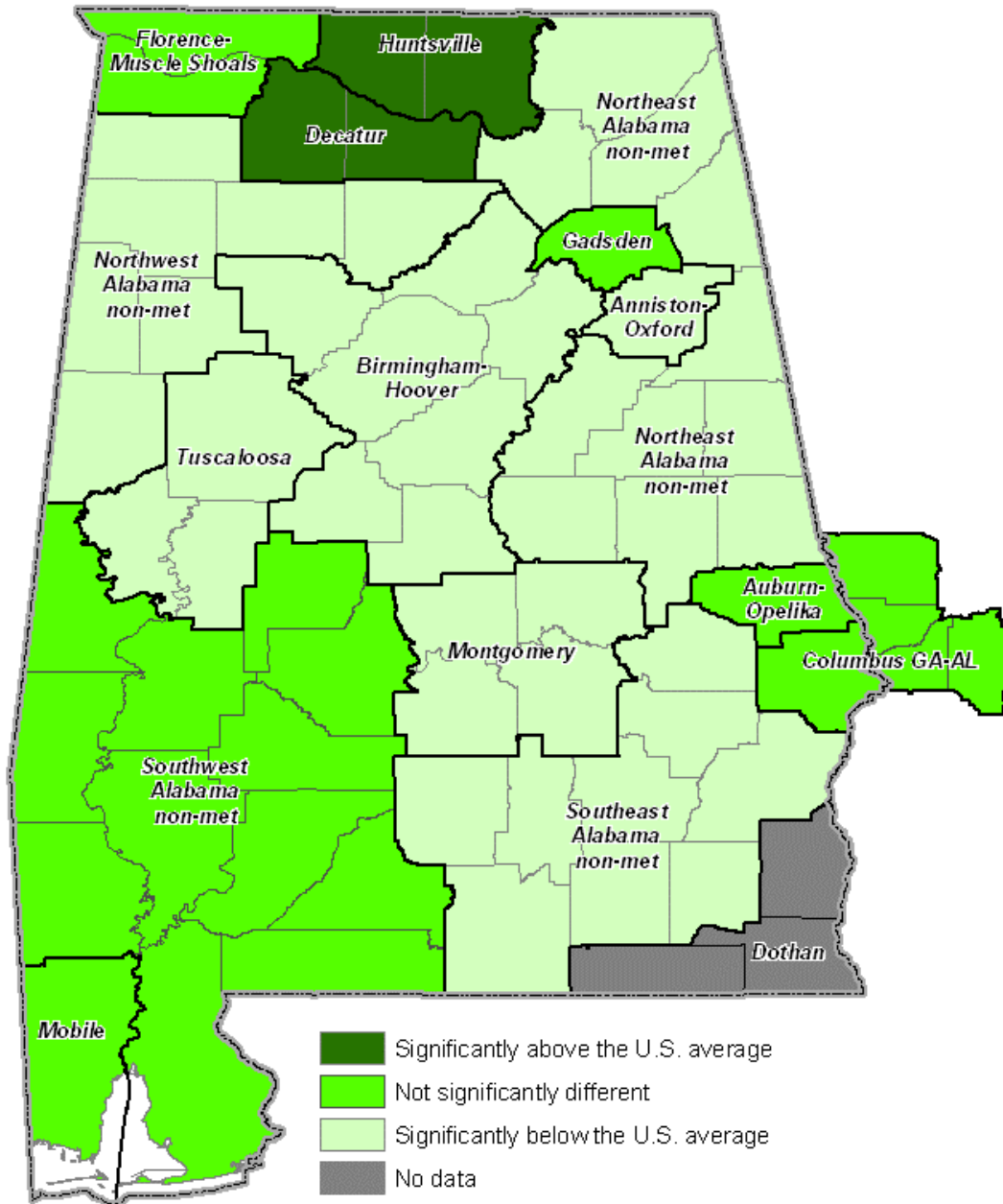


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, September 2011.
 Note: Significance testing was done at the 90-percent confidence level.

Wages for industrial engineers in metropolitan areas in Alabama

The Decatur metropolitan area paid the highest annual wage (\$86,880) in the State for industrial engineers, followed by Huntsville (\$85,090), both measurably higher than the national average for this occupation. Five metropolitan areas registered wages not significantly different than the national average, while four others had below-average wages for this occupation. At the bottom of the wage scale, industrial engineers in Tuscaloosa were paid \$68,110 annually, about \$10,000 below the U.S. average. The metropolitan areas with above-average wages for industrial engineers were located in the northern tier of Alabama, while those with wages comparable to and below that for the nation were spread geographically throughout the State. (See chart 2.)

Chart 2. Mean annual wages for industrial engineers by area, Alabama, May 2010

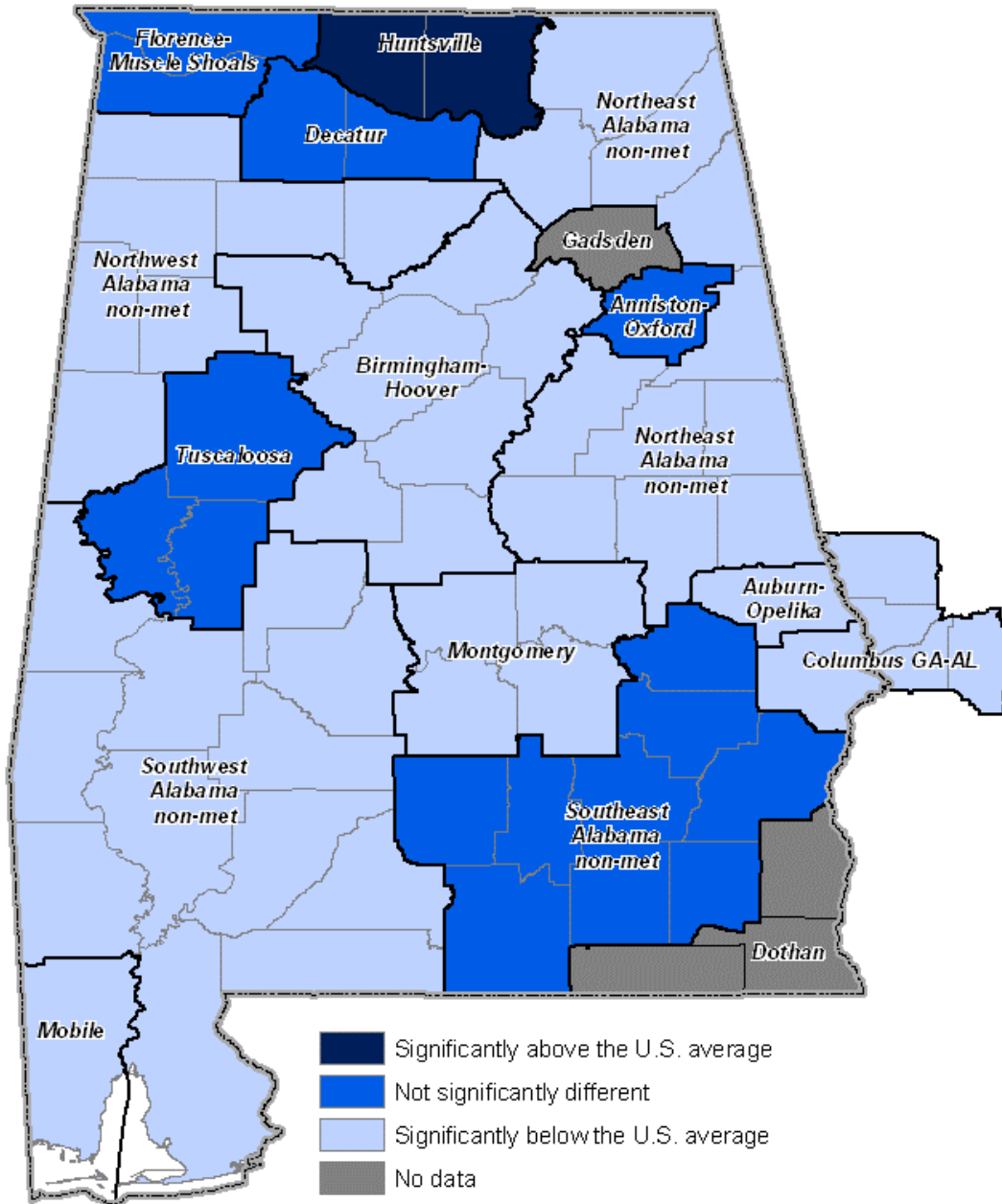


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, September 2011.
 Note: Significance testing was done at the 90-percent confidence level.

Wages for mechanical engineers in metropolitan areas in Alabama

At \$87,740, Tuscaloosa was the highest-paying metropolitan area in Alabama for mechanical engineers, close to the national average. Mechanical engineers in Montgomery were paid the least among the metropolitan areas in the State at \$67,680. The metropolitan areas with mechanical engineers recording wages close to and below the national average wages were spread geographically throughout the State. (See chart 3.)

Chart 3. Mean annual wages for mechanical engineers by area, Alabama, May 2010



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, September 2011.
 Note: Significance testing was done at the 90-percent confidence level.

These statistics are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a federal-state cooperative program between the BLS and State Workforce Agencies, in this case, the Department of Industrial Relations in Alabama. 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 non-military detailed occupations for the nation, states, metropolitan statistical areas, metropolitan divisions, and nonmetropolitan areas.

OES wage and employment data for civil, industrial, and mechanical engineers in the state and metropolitan areas 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 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. 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 2010 estimates was 78.2 percent based on establishments and 74.4 percent based on employment. May 2010 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual periods collected over a 3-year period: May 2010, November 2009, May 2009, November 2008, May 2008, and November 2007. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm.

The May 2010 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 are collected on two structures were combined, see the OES Frequently Asked Questions online at www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm#Ques41.

OES data by state and metropolitan/nonmetropolitan area are available from www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcst.htm and www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcma.htm, respectively.

Metropolitan 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.

Anniston-Oxford, Ala. Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) includes Calhoun County in Alabama.

Auburn-Opelika, Ala. Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) includes Lee County in Alabama.

Birmingham-Hoover, Ala. Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) includes Bibb, Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, and Walker Counties in Alabama.

Columbus, Ga.-Ala. Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) includes Chattahoochee, Harris, Marion, and Muscogee Counties in Georgia and Russell County in Alabama.

Decatur, Ala. Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) includes Lawrence and Morgan Counties in Alabama.

Dothan, Ala. Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) includes Geneva, Henry, and Houston Counties in Alabama.

Florence-Muscle Shoals, Ala. Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) includes Colbert and Lauderdale Counties in Alabama.

Gadsden, Ala. Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) includes Etowah County in Alabama.

Huntsville, Ala. Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) includes Limestone and Madison Counties in Alabama.

Mobile, Ala. Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) includes Mobile County in Alabama.

Montgomery, Ala. Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) includes Autauga, Elmore, Lowndes, and Montgomery Counties in Alabama.

Tuscaloosa, Ala. Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) includes Greene, Hale, and Tuscaloosa Counties in Alabama.

Additional information

OES data are available on the Southeast regional web page at www.bls.gov/ro4/home.htm. If you have additional questions, contact the Southeast Economic Analysis and Information Office at 404-893-4222 during the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. ET. 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.