

MID-ATLANTIC INFORMATION OFFICE
Philadelphia, Pa.

For release: Thursday, August 9, 2012

12-1641-PHI

Technical Information: (215) 597-3282 • BLSInfoPhiladelphia@bls.gov • www.bls.gov/ro3
Media Contact: (215) 861-5600 • BLSMediaPhiladelphia@bls.gov

OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN CHARLESTON – MAY 2011

Workers in the Charleston Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$18.58 in May 2011, roughly 15 percent below the nationwide average of \$21.74, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were significantly lower than their respective national averages in 18 of the 22 major occupational groups, including management, computer and mathematical, and protective service. (See table A and box note at end of release.)

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

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Charleston	United States	Charleston	Percent difference ¹
Total, all occupations	100.0	100.0	\$21.74	\$18.58 *	-15
Management	4.8	4.5 *	51.64	37.86 *	-27
Business and financial operations	4.8	3.6 *	33.05	25.43 *	-23
Computer and mathematical	2.7	1.4 *	37.85	26.85 *	-29
Architecture and engineering	1.8	1.6 *	37.08	28.90 *	-22
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.8	32.44	23.53 *	-27
Community and social service	1.5	1.5	21.07	16.69 *	-21
Legal	0.8	1.7 *	47.30	35.95 *	-24
Education, training, and library	6.6	4.7 *	24.46	20.08 *	-18
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.3	0.8 *	25.89	17.61 *	-32
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.9	7.0 *	34.97	30.37 *	-13
Healthcare support	3.1	3.3	13.16	10.49 *	-20
Protective service	2.5	3.1 *	20.54	13.91 *	-32
Food preparation and serving related	8.7	7.7 *	10.30	9.56 *	-7
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.3	2.8 *	12.29	9.94 *	-19
Personal care and service	2.8	2.8	11.84	9.87 *	-17
Sales and related	10.6	9.5 *	18.04	14.33 *	-21
Office and administrative support	16.7	17.7 *	16.40	14.71 *	-10
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.0 *	11.68	11.62	-1
Construction and extraction	3.9	8.4 *	21.46	22.16	3
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	5.2 *	20.86	18.89 *	-9
Production	6.5	4.3 *	16.45	17.77	8
Transportation and material moving	6.7	7.9 *	15.96	16.40	3

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

When compared to the nationwide distribution, Charleston employment was more highly concentrated in seven occupational groups including construction and extraction; installation, maintenance and repair; and healthcare practitioners and technical. Conversely, 11 groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation; these groups included production; education, training, and library; and computer and mathematical.

One occupational group—construction and extraction—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Charleston had 12,010 jobs in construction and extraction, accounting for 8.4 percent of local area employment, more than twice the 3.9-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$22.16, not significantly different from the national wage of \$21.46.

With employment of 2,070, operating engineers and other construction equipment operators made up the largest occupation within the construction and extraction group, followed by construction laborers (1,590) and electricians (1,360). Among the higher-paying jobs were first-line supervisors of construction trades and extraction workers, with a mean hourly wage of \$35.86, and mining roof bolters, with a wage of \$27.51. At the lower end of the wage scale were highway maintenance workers (\$10.40) and roofers (\$12.62). (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_16620.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 as it does nationally. In Charleston, above-average concentrations of employment were found in several of the occupations within the construction and extraction group. For instance, mining roof bolters were employed at 77 times the national rate in Charleston, and operating engineers and other construction equipment operators, more than 5 times the U.S. rate. In contrast, construction and maintenance painters had a location quotient of 1.1 in Charleston, 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, WorkForce West Virginia. The OES survey provides estimates of employment and hourly and annual wages for wage and salary workers in 22 major occupational groups and about 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 Charleston 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 are also 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 Charleston Metropolitan Statistical Area included 1,793 establishments with a response rate of 69 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm.

The May 2011 OES estimates are 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.

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 **Charleston Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)** includes Boone, Clay, Kanawha, Lincoln, and Putnam Counties in West Virginia.

Additional information

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, Charleston Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2011

Occupation ¹	Employment ²		Mean wage	
	Level	Location quotient ³	Hourly	Annual ⁴
Construction and extraction occupations	12,010	2.2	\$22.16	\$46,100
First-line supervisors of construction trades and extraction workers	960	1.9	35.86	74,590
Brickmasons and blockmasons	130	1.8	16.12	33,520
Carpenters	760	1.2	17.71	36,830
Cement masons and concrete finishers	170	1.2	16.73	34,800
Construction laborers	1,590	1.8	18.35	38,160
Operating engineers and other construction equipment operators	2,070	5.5	22.05	45,860
Electricians	1,360	2.4	24.02	49,970
Glaziers	50	1.1	24.35	50,660
Painters, construction and maintenance	220	1.1	19.85	41,280
Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	480	1.2	20.80	43,270
Roofers	100	0.9	12.62	26,250
Sheet metal workers	210	1.4	22.69	47,190
Structural iron and steel workers	110	1.7	27.23	56,640
Helpers--carpenters	50	1.2	(5)	(5)
Helpers--pipelayers, plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	(5)	(5)	14.39	29,930
Construction and building inspectors	110	1.1	21.06	43,800
Fence erectors	(5)	(5)	11.96	24,870
Highway maintenance workers	150	0.9	10.40	21,630
Septic tank servicers and sewer pipe cleaners	70	2.6	13.64	28,370
Service unit operators, oil, gas, and mining	(5)	(5)	21.42	44,560
Explosives workers, ordnance handling experts, and blasters	(5)	(5)	16.57	34,460
Continuous mining machine operators	(5)	(5)	25.32	52,670
Mine cutting and channeling machine operators	(5)	(5)	20.12	41,850
Roof bolters, mining	520	77.1	27.51	57,220
Roustabouts, oil and gas	160	2.8	15.05	31,300
Helpers--extraction workers	(5)	(5)	18.80	39,110

¹ For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in the Charleston MSA, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_16620.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.