

MID-ATLANTIC INFORMATION OFFICE
Philadelphia, Pa.

For release: Monday, October 17, 2011

PLS – 4829

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

COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN PENNSYLVANIA – FIRST QUARTER 2011

Employment Gains in Washington and Butler Counties Rank Among Top Ten in the Nation

Employment rose in 18 of the 19 largest counties in Pennsylvania from March 2010 to March 2011, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2010 annual average employment.) Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that Washington County recorded the fastest employment gain in Pennsylvania, up 4.3 percent—the 3rd-fastest growth among the 322 largest counties nationwide. Butler County followed closely, up 4.2 percent and ranking 6th among the nation's large counties. One other county, Erie, was also among the fastest-growing large counties in the United States, posting a job gain of 3.2 percent and ranking 15th in the nation. Lackawanna County recorded the only employment decline among Pennsylvania's large counties, down 0.4 percent.

Nationally, employment grew 1.3 percent during this 12-month period, as 256 of the 322 large counties nationwide gained jobs. Elkhart County, Ind., experienced the largest percentage increase in employment, up 6.2 percent over the year. Sacramento, Calif., had the largest employment decrease with a loss of 1.6 percent.

Among the 19 largest counties in Pennsylvania, employment was highest in Allegheny County (666,800), which contains the city of Pittsburgh, in March 2011. One other county, Philadelphia, had employment above 600,000. Together, Pennsylvania's large counties accounted for 76.6 percent of total employment within the Commonwealth. Nationwide, the 322 largest counties made up 70.7 percent of total U.S. employment.

The average weekly wage in Butler County rose 9.3 percent from the first quarter of 2010 to the first quarter of 2011—the fastest increase among Pennsylvania's large counties and the 9th-fastest rate of growth nationwide. Pennsylvania's second-highest growth rate was in Washington County, where average weekly wages increased 8.8 percent. Montgomery County had the highest average weekly wage among the 19 largest counties in the Commonwealth at \$1,198, followed by the counties of Chester (\$1,164) and Philadelphia (\$1,079). (See table 1.) Nationally, the average weekly wage rose 5.2 percent over the year to \$935 in the first quarter of 2011.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 48 counties in Pennsylvania with employment below 75,000. Forty-six of these smaller counties had average weekly wages below the national average. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

Five of Pennsylvania's 19 large counties recorded wage increases larger than or equal to the national advance of 5.2 percent since the first quarter of 2010. Wage growth in two of these counties, Butler and Washington, ranked in the top tenth of the 322 large counties nationwide (9th and 11th, respectively). Pennsylvania's 14 remaining large counties all experienced wage gains greater than 2.0 percent over the year.

Of the 322 largest counties, 315 had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. Peoria, Ill., led the nation in average weekly wage growth with an increase of 18.9 percent from the first quarter of 2010. Santa Clara, Calif., was second with a gain of 12.4 percent, followed by the counties of Macomb, Mich. (12.0 percent), Clayton, Ga. (11.9 percent), and Wayne, Mich. (11.3 percent).

Nationwide, three large counties recorded decreases in average weekly wages over the year. Williamson, Texas, had the largest decrease in wages with a decline of 3.8 percent from the first quarter of 2010. Smaller declines were reported in Hudson, N.J. (-1.5 percent) and Durham, N.C. (-0.5 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

The average weekly wage in one of Pennsylvania's 19 large counties, Montgomery, ranked 28th in the nation, placing it in the top tenth of all 322 large counties. Chester and Philadelphia also ranked in the top 50 nationwide. In addition to these three counties, Delaware and Allegheny Counties also had wages above the U.S. average of \$935.

In five other large counties in the Commonwealth, the average weekly wages placed in the bottom fourth of the national ranking. Four of these counties—Lackawanna, Luzerne, Erie, and Westmoreland—ranked among the bottom 50 in the United States.

Average weekly wages in Pennsylvania's smaller counties

Forty-six of the 48 counties in Pennsylvania with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of \$935. The exceptions were Montour (\$1,014) and Greene (\$964). Centre County had the third-highest wage, \$770. Perry reported the lowest weekly wage among the smaller counties as well as the Commonwealth as a whole, averaging \$516 in the first quarter of 2011. (See table 2.)

When all 67 counties in Pennsylvania were considered, 60 had wages below the national average of \$935. Forty-three reported wages below \$700, 17 had wages from \$701 to \$900, 5 had wages from \$901 to \$1,100, and 2 had wages above \$1,100. (See chart 1.) Four of the seven counties that recorded above-average wages are concentrated in the Philadelphia metropolitan area, and another contains the city of Pittsburgh.

Additional statistics and other information

QCEW data for states have been included in this release in table 3. For additional information about quarterly employment and wages data, please read the Technical Note or visit the QCEW Web site at www.bls.gov/cew/.

An annual bulletin, *Employment and Wages Annual Averages*, features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2009 edition of this bulletin contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2010 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from the 2009 Employment and Wages Annual Bulletin are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn09.htm. This web-only publication has replaced the annual print bulletin, *Employment and Wages Annual Averages*. The March 2010 issue of this annual bulletin was the final one to be issued on paper.

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.

For personal assistance or further information on the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the Mid-Atlantic Information Office at 215-597-3282 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. ET.

Technical Note

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from summaries of employment and total pay of workers covered by state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) legislation and provided by State Workforce Agencies (SWAs). The 9.1 million employer reports cover 127.9 million full- and part-time workers. The average weekly wage values are calculated by dividing quarterly total wages by the average of the three monthly employment levels of those covered by UI programs. The result is then divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or states for reasons other than changes in the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at www.bls.gov/cew/; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

QCEW data are not designed as a time series. QCEW data are simply the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. Establishments can move in or out of a county or industry for a number of reasons—some reflecting economic events, others reflecting administrative changes.

The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. These potential differences result from the states' continuing receipt, review and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

Table 1. Covered¹ employment and wages in the United States and the 19 largest counties in Pennsylvania, first quarter 2011²

Area	Employment		Average Weekly Wage ³				
	March 2011 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2010-11 ⁴	National ranking by percent change ⁵	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁵	Percent change, first quarter 2010-11 ⁴	National ranking by percent change ⁵
United States ⁶	127,851.0	1.3	--	\$935	--	5.2	--
Pennsylvania	5,459.3	1.5	--	896	16	4.6	19
Allegheny, Pa.	666.8	1.5	106	997	65	5.2	85
Berks, Pa.	161.7	1.4	118	780	210	4.0	165
Bucks, Pa.	244.9	0.5	206	855	143	3.1	226
Butler, Pa.	80.2	4.2	6	799	189	9.3	9
Chester, Pa.	233.3	1.1	148	1,164	34	2.9	242
Cumberland, Pa.	120.5	1.1	148	815	174	3.7	183
Dauphin, Pa.	173.3	0.4	216	889	125	4.6	116
Delaware, Pa.	205.3	1.7	86	1,003	62	3.7	183
Erie, Pa.	121.9	3.2	15	695	292	6.8	38
Lackawanna, Pa.	96.4	-0.4	277	665	304	2.9	242
Lancaster, Pa.	214.0	0.4	216	734	263	4.7	111
Lehigh, Pa.	170.4	2.0	65	879	130	3.8	180
Luzerne, Pa.	136.3	1.0	158	684	297	4.1	157
Montgomery, Pa.	456.4	0.2	242	1,198	28	2.1	285
Northampton, Pa.	97.6	0.6	196	791	199	4.6	116
Philadelphia, Pa.	628.0	1.2	139	1,079	46	4.5	125
Washington, Pa.	80.2	4.3	3	867	139	8.8	11
Westmoreland, Pa.	128.8	1.1	148	716	278	6.1	57
York, Pa.	168.2	1.6	97	789	204	3.5	197

¹ Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

² Data are preliminary.

³ Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

⁴ Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

⁵ Ranking does not include the county of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

⁶ Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Table 2. Covered¹ employment and wages in the United States and all of the counties in Pennsylvania, first quarter 2011²

Area	Employment March 2011	Average weekly wage ³	Area	Employment March 2011	Average weekly wage ³
United States ⁴	127,850,997	\$935	Luzerne	136,262	\$684
Pennsylvania	5,459,261	896	Lycoming	51,501	689
Adams	31,753	639	Mc Kean	15,751	692
Allegheny	666,795	997	Mercer	46,699	659
Armstrong	17,395	698	Mifflin	14,888	595
Beaver	53,625	735	Monroe	54,850	733
Bedford	14,979	575	Montgomery	456,392	1,198
Berks	161,661	780	Montour	15,742	1,014
Blair	57,323	646	Northampton	97,606	791
Bradford	23,856	713	Northumberland	27,700	632
Bucks	244,858	855	Perry	7,845	516
Butler	80,185	799	Philadelphia	627,974	1,079
Cambria	56,240	638	Pike	9,724	566
Cameron	2,126	635	Potter	5,310	668
Carbon	16,675	533	Schuylkill	49,249	643
Centre	64,239	770	Snyder	14,799	557
Chester	233,289	1,164	Somerset	25,269	620
Clarion	13,586	585	Sullivan	1,634	544
Clearfield	30,188	617	Susquehanna	8,854	588
Clinton	12,883	656	Tioga	13,032	627
Columbia	24,228	636	Union	15,878	677
Crawford	29,709	624	Venango	20,357	678
Cumberland	120,491	815	Warren	14,780	614
Dauphin	173,300	889	Washington	80,174	867
Delaware	205,283	1,003	Wayne	14,483	612
Elk	14,860	667	Westmoreland	128,774	716
Erie	121,875	695	Wyoming	9,552	728
Fayette	40,379	621	York	168,226	789
Forest	2,154	683			
Franklin	54,096	661			
Fulton	4,503	669			
Greene	14,110	964			
Huntingdon	12,743	589			
Indiana	32,575	733			
Jefferson	15,381	621			
Juniata	6,010	547			
Lackawanna	96,370	665			
Lancaster	213,986	734			
Lawrence	28,485	663			
Lebanon	47,704	660			
Lehigh	170,414	879			

¹ Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

² Data are preliminary.

³ Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

⁴ Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Table 3. Covered¹ employment and wages by state, first quarter 2011²

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ³			
	March 2011 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2010-11	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, first quarter 2010-11	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁴	127,851.0	1.3	\$935	--	5.2	--
Alabama	1,808.5	0.3	766	34	4.2	30
Alaska	310.1	2.0	912	15	3.8	36
Arizona	2,392.1	0.7	837	21	4.9	17
Arkansas	1,133.5	0.3	715	47	6.1	6
California	14,413.8	1.2	1,066	6	6.2	5
Colorado	2,179.8	1.3	952	11	4.4	27
Connecticut	1,589.2	1.4	1,282	3	6.3	4
Delaware	396.0	2.1	1,026	7	5.7	11
District of Columbia	702.3	2.5	1,540	1	2.4	51
Florida	7,235.9	1.2	794	28	3.8	36
Georgia	3,771.0	1.4	885	17	5.7	11
Hawaii	593.8	1.2	790	30	3.1	47
Idaho	590.3	-0.1	659	48	4.1	31
Illinois	5,472.4	1.2	1,003	9	6.0	7
Indiana	2,717.1	1.9	772	33	4.5	22
Iowa	1,419.3	0.6	738	40	4.5	22
Kansas	1,293.3	0.6	748	36	4.0	33
Kentucky	1,715.6	1.5	737	42	3.7	40
Louisiana	1,841.3	0.9	798	27	4.5	22
Maine	558.6	0.1	723	43	4.8	18
Maryland	2,452.1	1.3	1,010	8	3.6	41
Massachusetts	3,116.5	1.2	1,159	5	5.8	10
Michigan	3,757.7	2.2	872	19	7.1	2
Minnesota	2,530.7	1.4	935	14	6.0	7
Mississippi	1,074.8	0.6	650	51	3.2	46
Missouri	2,562.3	0.3	786	31	3.0	49
Montana	412.2	0.4	656	50	3.6	41
Nebraska	886.2	0.7	721	46	3.9	35
Nevada	1,102.6	0.4	802	26	3.0	49
New Hampshire	596.3	1.1	876	18	5.2	15
New Jersey	3,701.1	0.0	1,160	4	3.5	43
New Mexico	776.5	-0.1	738	40	3.1	47
New York	8,336.5	1.2	1,368	2	6.7	3
North Carolina	3,809.6	1.6	825	22	4.3	29
North Dakota	364.5	5.0	748	36	9.5	1
Ohio	4,870.6	1.4	819	23	4.6	19
Oklahoma	1,491.5	1.0	739	39	5.3	13
Oregon	1,590.3	1.3	812	24	4.6	19
Pennsylvania	5,459.3	1.5	896	16	4.6	19
Rhode Island	438.1	0.1	863	20	3.4	44
South Carolina	1,767.2	1.4	722	45	4.5	22
South Dakota	382.3	1.3	659	48	4.1	31
Tennessee	2,575.9	1.7	793	29	3.8	36
Texas	10,324.3	2.2	946	13	5.9	9
Utah	1,156.9	2.0	753	35	3.4	44
Vermont	291.9	0.9	741	38	3.8	36
Virginia	3,539.9	1.5	968	10	4.0	33
Washington	2,785.3	1.2	947	12	5.2	15
West Virginia	689.3	1.0	723	43	4.5	22
Wisconsin	2,609.5	1.6	779	32	5.3	13
Wyoming	265.2	1.0	808	25	4.4	27
Puerto Rico	923.0	-2.6	500	[5]	0.8	[5]
Virgin Islands	45.1	0.4	738	[5]	1.0	[5]

¹ Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

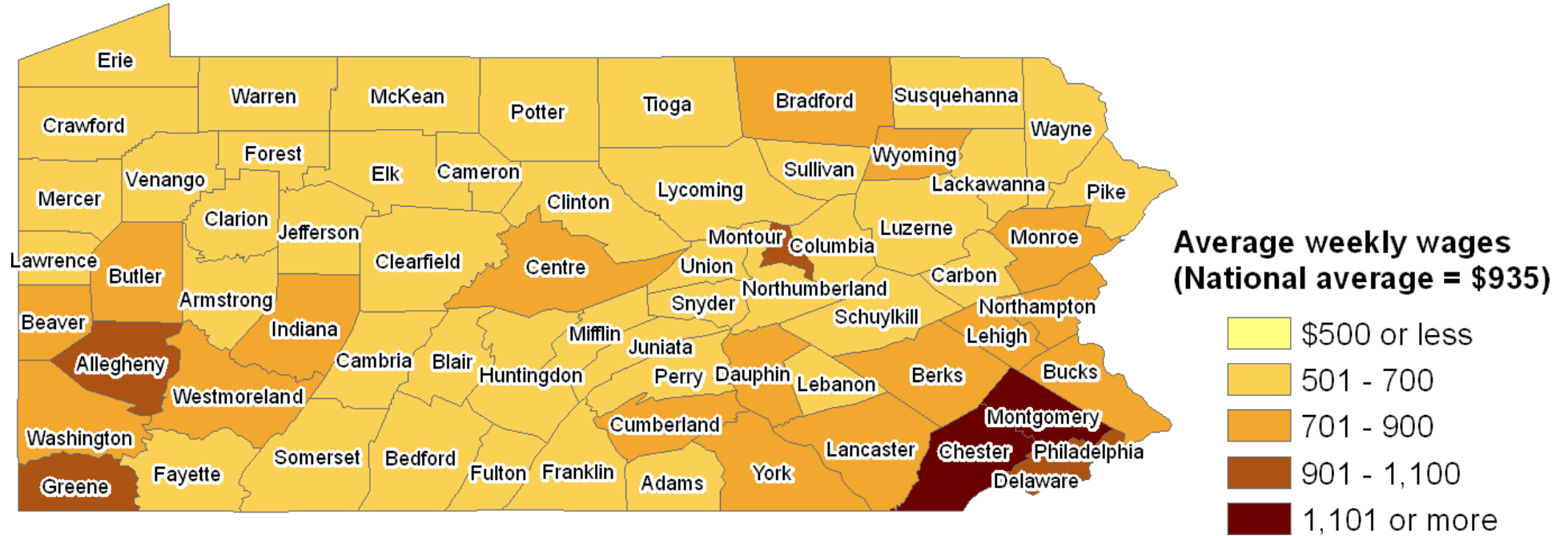
² Data are preliminary.

³ Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

⁴ Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

⁵ Data not included in the national ranking.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in Pennsylvania, first quarter 2011



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics