



NEWS RELEASE



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COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN GEORGIA – FOURTH QUARTER 2011

Employment rose in eight of the nine large counties in Georgia from December 2010 to December 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.) Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that employment increases ranged from 1.9 percent in Cobb County to 0.2 percent in Richmond County. Employment in Clayton County was unchanged over the year. (See table 1.)

Nationally, employment increased 1.4 percent during the 12-month period, as 266 of the 322 large U.S. counties gained jobs. Kern, Calif., posted the largest percentage increase with a gain of 5.3 percent over the year. Benton, Wash., experienced the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment with a loss of 3.4 percent.

Among the largest counties in Georgia, employment was highest in Fulton County (735,500) in December 2011. Three other counties—Gwinnett, Cobb, and De Kalb—had employment levels exceeding 275,000. Together, Georgia's nine large counties accounted for 55.5 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 322 largest counties made up 70.7 percent of total U.S. employment, which stood at 131.3 million in December 2011.

Average weekly wages decreased in each of Georgia's nine largest counties from the fourth quarter of 2010 to the fourth quarter of 2011. Fulton County recorded the largest wage decrease (-3.9 percent), followed by Cobb County (-3.1 percent). Despite recording the largest over-the-year decline in wages, Fulton County had the highest average weekly wage in the state at \$1,238, followed by the counties of De Kalb (\$979), Cobb (\$975), and Gwinnett (\$922). Nationally, the average weekly wage decreased 1.7 percent over the year to \$955 in the fourth quarter of 2011. (See table 1.)

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 150 counties with employment levels below 75,000 in Georgia. Average weekly wages in these counties ranged from \$894 to \$420. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

As noted, average weekly wages declined in all of Georgia's large counties from the fourth quarter of 2010 to the fourth quarter of 2011. Clayton County's 0.5-percent wage decline ranked 58th among the nation's 322 large counties, followed by De Kalb County (-1.0 percent, 95th). Wage declines among the remaining seven large counties in the state ranged from 3.9 percent to 1.9 percent and placed in the bottom half of the national ranking. (See table 1.)

Among the 322 largest U.S. counties, 282 had over-the-year decreases in average weekly wages in the fourth quarter of 2011. Olmsted, Minn., had the largest decrease (-21.3 percent), followed by the counties of Douglas, Colo. (-8.6 percent), Williamson, Tenn. (-6.7 percent), Durham, N.C. (-6.5 percent), and St. Clair, Ill. (-6.2 percent).

Nationwide, 36 large counties experienced growth in average weekly wages. Tulsa, Okla., ranked first with an over-the-year increase of 8.6 percent. Harford, Md., had the second largest increase (5.8 percent), followed by the counties of Lake, Ohio (4.9 percent), Snohomish, Wash. (3.0 percent), and Westmoreland, Pa. (2.9 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Average weekly wages in 4 of Georgia's 9 largest counties place in the top half of the national ranking among the 322 largest counties in the fourth quarter of 2011. The highest-paid counties—Fulton, DeKalb, and Cobb—were all above the U.S. average of \$955 and ranked in the top 100 nationwide. Gwinnet County with an average weekly wage of \$922 ranked 130th. Average weekly wages in the remaining five large counties placed in the bottom third of the national ranking. (See table 1.)

Nationally, average weekly wages were lower than average in 219 of the 322 largest counties. Horry, S.C. (\$569), reported the lowest wage, followed by the counties of Cameron, Texas (\$597), Hidalgo, Texas (\$601), Yakima, Wash. (\$648), and Lake, Fla. (\$649).

There were 103 large counties with an average weekly wage above the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2011. New York, N.Y., recorded the highest average weekly wage at \$1,889, followed by Santa Clara, Calif., at \$1,836. Rounding out the top five were Washington, D.C. (\$1,668), Suffolk, Mass. (\$1,599), San Francisco, Calif., (\$1,597).

Average weekly wages in Georgia's smaller counties

Among the 150 counties in Georgia with employment below 75,000, none registered an average weekly wage above the national average of \$955. Chattahoochee County (\$894) reported the highest weekly wage among the smaller counties, followed by the counties of Forsyth and Burke (\$886 each), and Wilkinson (\$835). Echols County reported the lowest weekly in the state, averaging \$420 in the fourth quarter of 2011. (See table 2.)

When all 159 counties in Georgia were considered, 75 reported average weekly wages under \$600, including 7 under \$500, 49 reported wages from \$600 to \$699, 20 had wages from \$700 to \$799, 11 had wages from \$800 to \$899, and 4 had wages at or above \$900. (See chart 1.)

Additional statistics and other information

Quarterly 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/.

Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2010 edition of this publication, which was published in November 2011, contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2011 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2010* are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn10.htm. The 2011 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available later in 2012.

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.

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 9.2 million employer reports cover 131.3 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. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and the 9 largest counties in Georgia, fourth quarter 2011 (2)

Area	Employment			Average Weekly Wage (3)			
	December 2011 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2010-11 (4)	National ranking by percent change (5)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level (5)	Percent change, fourth quarter 2010-11 (4)	National ranking by percent change (5)
United States (6)	131,254.2	1.4	--	\$955	--	-1.7	--
Georgia	3,826.9	1.0	--	885	20	-2.2	39
Bibb, Ga.	80.6	1.3	119	742	292	-2.2	195
Chatham, Ga.	131.2	1.1	144	806	245	-1.9	167
Clayton, Ga.	102.0	0.0	267	823	228	-0.5	58
Cobb, Ga.	297.0	1.9	83	975	91	-3.1	254
De Kalb, Ga.	278.6	1.2	130	979	89	-1.0	95
Fulton, Ga.	735.5	1.8	89	1,238	20	-3.9	283
Gwinnett, Ga.	305.4	1.6	97	922	130	-2.6	224
Muscogee, Ga.	94.1	1.1	144	761	281	-2.6	224
Richmond, Ga.	98.9	0.2	248	804	248	-2.1	185

(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. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Georgia, fourth quarter 2011 (2)

Area	Employment December 2011	Average weekly wage (3)	Area	Employment December 2011	Average weekly wage (3)
United States (4)	131,254,162	\$955			
Georgia	3,826,905	885	Douglas	35,390	\$650
Appling	6,364	728	Early	4,170	798
Atkinson	1,484	597	Echols	616	420
Bacon	3,140	590	Effingham	8,987	734
Baker	455	628	Elbert	5,684	590
Baldwin	15,390	584	Emanuel	6,734	555
Banks	4,482	563	Evans	4,185	553
Barrow	14,932	648	Fannin	5,190	546
Bartow	31,726	740	Fayette	37,700	782
Ben Hill	5,518	542	Floyd	36,252	757
Berrien	3,906	590	Forsyth	56,530	886
Bibb	80,600	742	Franklin	6,570	575
Bleckley	3,359	562	Fulton	735,468	1,238
Brantley	1,994	535	Gilmer	6,856	528
Brooks	3,253	523	Glascocock	411	447
Bryan	5,784	602	Glynn	34,696	744
Bulloch	21,899	603	Gordon	19,649	678
Burke	6,227	886	Grady	5,740	573
Butts	5,634	608	Greene	4,883	646
Calhoun	1,308	531	Gwinnett	305,449	922
Camden	14,100	730	Habersham	12,592	598
Candler	2,607	529	Hall	71,159	825
Carroll	36,185	725	Hancock	1,221	526
Catoosa	13,151	628	Haralson	7,107	673
Charlton	2,212	643	Harris	3,742	549
Chatham	131,170	806	Hart	5,959	677
Chattahoochee	2,321	894	Heard	2,041	834
Chattooga	5,755	550	Henry	48,714	675
Cherokee	45,006	717	Houston	58,591	812
Clarke	65,241	747	Irwin	2,000	545
Clay	635	537	Jackson	18,317	669
Clayton	102,001	823	Jasper	1,968	562
Clinch	2,146	602	Jeff Davis	4,103	560
Cobb	296,961	975	Jefferson	4,687	629
Coffee	14,688	585	Jenkins	1,193	527
Colquitt	15,039	558	Johnson	1,678	547
Columbia	29,541	673	Jones	3,323	589
Cook	3,979	504	Lamar	3,321	595
Coweta	30,645	681	Lanier	1,345	553
Crawford	1,072	596	Laurens	17,032	662
Crisp	7,153	566	Lee	5,297	589
Dade	2,922	606	Liberty	18,235	749
Dawson	7,816	507	Lincoln	1,320	545
Decatur	8,271	552	Long	895	512
De Kalb	278,615	979	Lowndes	45,642	639
Dodge	5,488	523	Lumpkin	6,117	623
Dooly	3,020	575	McDuffie	6,649	600
Dougherty	48,117	736	McIntosh	1,732	536
			Macon	2,895	675
			Madison	3,145	564

Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Georgia, fourth quarter 2011 (2)-continued

Area	Employment December 2011	Average weekly wage (3)	Area	Employment December 2011	Average weekly wage (3)
Marion	1,526	\$522	Sumter	10,401	\$575
Meriwether	4,407	591	Talbot	823	509
Miller	1,620	559	Taliaferro	168	451
Mitchell	8,046	549	Tattnall	5,741	601
Monroe	6,317	671	Taylor	1,632	630
Montgomery	1,560	537	Telfair	3,503	484
Morgan	5,941	591	Terrell	2,186	631
Murray	8,968	643	Thomas	20,825	685
Muscogee	94,108	761	Tift	17,658	640
Newton	20,028	718	Toombs	10,923	601
Oconee	7,993	711	Towns	3,079	511
Oglethorpe	1,593	486	Treutlen	1,119	492
Paulding	19,279	612	Troup	34,195	781
Peach	8,166	642	Turner	2,139	533
Pickens	6,894	640	Twiggs	997	653
Pierce	3,710	562	Union	6,005	595
Pike	2,226	579	Upson	6,945	603
Polk	10,899	621	Walker	12,678	595
Pulaski	2,764	639	Walton	18,685	675
Putnam	5,421	622	Ware	13,939	628
Quitman	436	493	Warren	1,078	569
Rabun	4,268	544	Washington	6,790	646
Randolph	1,774	594	Wayne	8,081	713
Richmond	98,872	804	Webster	561	579
Rockdale	29,405	826	Wheeler	1,411	595
Schley	1,008	655	White	5,974	569
Screven	3,335	624	Whitfield	52,805	722
Seminole	2,127	617	Wilcox	1,187	546
Spalding	20,691	628	Wilkes	2,879	563
Stephens	8,773	654	Wilkinson	2,824	835
Stewart	1,132	659	Worth	3,500	579

(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. Covered (1) employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2011 (2)

State	Employment		Average weekly wage (3)			
	December 2011 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2010-11	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2010-11	National ranking by percent change
United States (4)	131,254.2	1.4	\$955	--	-1.7	--
Alabama	1,828.3	0.2	832	31	-0.8	14
Alaska	311.3	1.6	982	11	-0.5	10
Arizona	2,458.4	1.7	882	21	-1.1	17
Arkansas	1,157.1	0.9	736	47	-1.2	19
California	14,731.8	1.3	1,100	6	-2.7	47
Colorado	2,250.1	2.1	975	13	-2.6	46
Connecticut	1,642.0	0.9	1,188	4	-3.1	49
Delaware	405.9	0.4	984	10	-1.6	26
District of Columbia	708.0	1.3	1,668	1	-1.2	19
Florida	7,364.1	1.4	847	29	-2.8	48
Georgia	3,826.9	1.0	885	20	-2.2	39
Hawaii	607.0	1.4	845	30	-1.5	23
Idaho	606.4	0.8	717	50	-2.2	39
Illinois	5,635.9	1.1	1,013	8	-2.1	35
Indiana	2,799.2	2.0	789	41	-1.9	32
Iowa	1,464.2	1.1	793	40	-0.8	14
Kansas	1,320.1	0.7	800	38	-1.5	23
Kentucky	1,770.2	1.3	786	42	-1.0	16
Louisiana	1,870.8	1.0	850	27	-1.7	28
Maine	580.9	0.4	755	46	-1.8	30
Maryland	2,516.4	1.1	1,058	7	-2.0	33
Massachusetts	3,230.8	1.3	1,192	3	-2.1	35
Michigan	3,911.8	2.4	933	18	-0.5	10
Minnesota	2,636.4	2.1	936	16	-3.9	51
Mississippi	1,083.8	0.3	699	51	-1.1	17
Missouri	2,617.0	0.8	825	32	-1.7	28
Montana	426.7	1.8	727	48	0.7	4
Nebraska	910.5	0.8	762	45	-1.3	21
Nevada	1,124.1	0.8	852	26	-3.2	50
New Hampshire	615.4	0.9	971	15	-0.7	13
New Jersey	3,811.6	0.6	1,138	5	-2.1	35
New Mexico	784.3	-0.3	799	39	-2.2	39
New York	8,618.4	1.4	1,197	2	-1.8	30
North Carolina	3,885.9	1.3	824	33	-2.0	33
North Dakota	397.0	7.6	871	23	7.7	1
Ohio	5,027.6	1.3	855	25	-1.3	21
Oklahoma	1,530.0	1.3	817	34	2.6	2
Oregon	1,629.8	1.2	850	27	-0.2	6
Pennsylvania	5,595.1	0.7	936	16	-1.6	26
Rhode Island	451.9	0.1	919	19	-2.1	35
South Carolina	1,796.1	1.3	763	44	-1.5	23
South Dakota	397.0	1.5	724	49	1.4	3
Tennessee	2,654.9	2.1	858	24	-2.3	42
Texas	10,607.9	2.4	973	14	-0.3	8
Utah	1,202.8	2.8	806	37	-2.5	45
Vermont	303.9	1.3	809	36	-0.5	10
Virginia	3,625.0	1.3	1,004	9	-2.4	43
Washington	2,843.6	1.4	979	12	-0.2	6
West Virginia	714.0	2.2	776	43	-0.3	8
Wisconsin	2,689.6	0.7	817	34	-2.4	43
Wyoming	276.9	2.3	876	22	0.6	5
Puerto Rico	960.9	0.1	552	(5)	-1.1	(5)
Virgin Islands	43.2	-4.0	772	(5)	-3.4	(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 in Georgia, fourth quarter 2011

