



## NEWS RELEASE



MIDWEST INFORMATION OFFICE  
Chicago, Ill.

**For release: Thursday, August 2, 2012**

**12-1533-CHI**

General information: (312) 353-1880 • BLSInfoChicago@bls.gov • www.bls.gov/ro5  
Media contact: (312) 353-1138

### **COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN ILLINOIS – FOURTH QUARTER 2011**

Nine of Illinois' 13 large counties reported employment increases 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 Charlene Peiffer noted that, at 2.2 percent, Du Page County was the only large county in the state to exceed the national job growth of 1.4 percent.

Nationally, employment increased in 266 of the 322 largest U.S. counties. Kern, Calif., posted the largest increase, with a gain of 5.3 percent over the year. Benton, Wash., experienced the largest over-the-year decrease in employment among the largest counties in the U.S. with a loss of 3.4 percent.

Among the 13 largest counties in Illinois, employment was highest in Cook County (2,413,100) in December 2011. Two other large counties, Du Page (570,900) and Lake (313,600) had employment levels of more than 300,000. Collectively, Illinois' 13 large counties accounted for 80.0 percent of the state's employment with Cook County alone accounting for 42.8 percent. Nationwide, the 322 largest counties made up 70.7 percent of total U.S. employment.

Average weekly wages in St. Clair and Lake Counties fell 6.2 percent and 4.5 percent, respectively, from the fourth quarter of 2010 to the fourth quarter of 2011, the largest declines among Illinois' 13 large counties. Lake County had the highest average weekly wage in the state at \$1,208, followed by Cook (\$1,122), and Du Page (\$1,112) Counties. (See table 1.) Nationally, the average weekly wage fell 1.7 percent over the year to \$955 in the fourth quarter of 2011.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 89 counties in Illinois with employment below 75,000. Eighty-five of these smaller counties had average weekly wages below the national average. (See table 2.)

#### **Large county wage changes**

Four of Illinois' 13 large counties recorded wage declines greater than the national decrease of 1.7 percent from the fourth quarter of 2010 to the fourth quarter of 2011. (See table 1.) As noted, St. Clair and Lake Counties experienced the state's largest wage declines, ranking 315<sup>th</sup> and 298<sup>th</sup>, respectively, among the nation's 322 largest counties. In total, 10 large counties in Illinois posted falling wages while the remaining three counties, McLean (1.5 percent, ranked 11<sup>th</sup>), McHenry (0.6 percent, ranked 26<sup>th</sup>), and Peoria (0.3 percent, ranked 32<sup>nd</sup>), recorded gains.

Nationwide, 282 large counties experienced declines in average weekly wages. Olmsted, Minn., had the greatest wage loss (-21.3 percent). Douglas, Colo., had the second largest decrease (-8.6 percent), followed by Williamson, Tenn. (-6.7 percent).

Among the 322 largest counties, 36 had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages in the fourth quarter of 2011. Tulsa, Okla., had the largest average weekly wage increase with a gain of 8.6 percent, followed by the counties of Harford, Md. (5.8 percent), 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 Illinois' 13 large counties were above the national average of \$955 in the fourth quarter of 2011. Lake County (\$1,208) placed 24<sup>th</sup>, followed by Cook (\$1,122, 41<sup>st</sup>), Du Page (\$1,112, 44<sup>th</sup>), and Sangamon (\$956, 102<sup>nd</sup>). Champaign (\$786) reported the lowest average weekly wage among the state's large counties and ranked 264<sup>th</sup> nationwide.

Nationally, New York, N.Y., recorded the highest average weekly wage at \$1,889, followed by Santa Clara, Calif. (\$1,836), Washington, D.C. (\$1,668), Suffolk, Mass. (\$1,599), and San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,597).

There were 219 large counties with an average weekly wage below the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2011. Horry, S.C. (\$569), reported the lowest wage, followed by the counties of Cameron, Texas (\$597), Hidalgo, Texas (\$601), and Yakima, Wash. (\$648).

### **Average weekly wages in Illinois' smaller counties**

Eight-five of the 89 counties in Illinois with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of \$955. The exceptions were Rock Island (\$1,219), which was also the highest wage among all Illinois counties, Christian (\$1,115), Tazewell (\$1,082), and Grundy (\$979). Calhoun reported the lowest weekly wage among the smaller counties, averaging \$451 in the fourth quarter of 2011. (See table 2.)

When all 102 counties in Illinois were considered, all but eight had wages below the national average of \$955. Two counties reported average weekly wages below \$550, 30 reported wages from \$550 to \$649, 39 had wages from \$650 to \$749, 17 had wages from \$750 to \$849, and 14 had wages above \$850. (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/](http://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 the *Employment and Wages Annual 2010* are now available online at [www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn10htm](http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn10htm). The 2011 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available later in 2012.

## 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 covered 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/](http://www.bls.gov/cew/); however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised and may not match the data contained on the BLS 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.

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. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and the 13 largest counties in Illinois, 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-	National ranking by percent change (5)
United States (6)	131,254.2	1.4	--	\$955	--	-1.7	--
Illinois	5,635.9	1.1	--	1,013	8	-2.1	35
Champaign, Ill.	87.4	-0.5	291	786	264	-0.6	67
Cook, Ill.	2,413.1	1.3	119	1,122	41	-2.9	240
Du Page, Ill.	570.9	2.2	63	1,112	44	-1.1	105
Kane, Ill.	192.5	0.2	248	863	173	-0.9	88
Lake, Ill.	313.6	0.1	256	1,208	24	-4.5	298
Madison, Ill.	94.9	-0.7	303	791	260	-1.5	126
McHenry, Ill.	92.4	-0.6	298	820	230	0.6	26
McLean, Ill.	86.2	0.3	238	937	119	1.5	11
Peoria, Ill.	102.6	0.4	231	926	127	0.3	32
Sangamon, Ill.	130.5	0.8	179	956	102	-0.1	38
St. Clair, Ill.	96.6	-2.9	319	796	259	-6.2	315
Will, Ill.	201.4	1.1	144	827	223	-4.4	296
Winnebago, Ill.	125.8	0.1	256	815	235	-1.5	126

(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 Illinois, 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	Lawrence	4,286	\$676
Illinois	5,635,938	1013	Lee	12,513	739
Adams	32,992	746	Livingston	14,295	761
Alexander	1,936	738	Logan	8,803	718
Bond	4,329	662	Macon	51,358	855
Boone	13,948	897	Macoupin	9,981	640
Brown	3,307	824	Madison	94,884	791
Bureau	11,231	703	Marion	13,159	667
Calhoun	807	451	Marshall	3,156	649
Carroll	4,075	624	Mason	3,126	628
Cass	5,678	675	Massac	3,811	797
Champaign	87,408	786	McDonough	12,262	677
Christian	11,175	1,115	McHenry	92,356	820
Clark	4,265	644	McLean	86,199	937
Clay	4,953	670	Menard	2,032	570
Clinton	11,982	677	Mercer	3,100	559
Coles	22,305	654	Monroe	8,314	628
Cook	2,413,079	1,122	Montgomery	9,159	710
Crawford	7,669	794	Morgan	14,451	684
Cumberland	2,464	596	Moultrie	4,676	631
De Kalb	35,776	742	Ogle	15,544	789
De Witt	6,392	929	Peoria	102,598	926
Douglas	6,893	659	Perry	5,003	644
Du Page	570,919	1,112	Piatt	3,224	643
Edgar	6,548	687	Pike	4,083	553
Edwards	2,334	678	Pope	608	597
Effingham	20,114	711	Pulaski	1,665	705
Fayette	5,966	618	Putnam	1,740	807
Ford	4,529	697	Randolph	12,023	701
Franklin	8,934	607	Richland	6,183	628
Fulton	8,710	578	Rock Island	74,628	1,219
Gallatin	1,126	655	Saline	9,135	749
Greene	2,620	531	Sangamon	130,534	956
Grundy	16,071	979	Schuyler	1,834	755
Hamilton	1,720	650	Scott	1,034	689
Hancock	3,921	567	Shelby	4,659	615
Hardin	904	561	St. Clair	96,589	796
Henderson	1,137	574	Stark	1,271	660
Henry	13,380	626	Stephenson	18,018	753
Iroquois	8,084	603	Tazewell	59,853	1,082
Jackson	25,889	669	Union	4,857	624
Jasper	2,274	723	Vermilion	28,628	718
Jefferson	18,657	777	Wabash	3,254	664
Jersey	4,833	591	Warren	6,167	613
Jo Daviess	7,806	630	Washington	4,991	718
Johnson	2,254	761	Wayne	4,452	577
Kane	192,517	863	White	4,505	711
Kankakee	41,957	715	Whiteside	20,409	655
Kendall	25,057	739	Will	201,404	827
Knox	19,617	610	Williamson	26,131	696
La Salle	42,686	767	Winnebago	125,801	815
Lake	313,618	1,208	Woodford	10,587	673

(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 by county in Illinois, fourth quarter 2011**

