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## OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN MERCED, MAY 2011

Workers in the Merced Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$18.89 in May 2011, about 13 percent below the nationwide average of \$21.74, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Richard J. Holden noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were significantly higher than their respective national averages in 3 of the 22 major occupational groups: protective service; education, training, and library; and building and grounds cleaning and maintenance. Nine groups had significantly lower wages than their respective national averages, including computer and mathematical; arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media; and management.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 3 of the 22 occupational groups, including education, training, and library; and transportation and material moving. Conversely, 10 groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including business and financial operations, healthcare practitioners and technical, and computer and mathematical. (See table A and box note at end of release.)

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

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Merced	United States	Merced	Percent difference <sup>1</sup>
<b>Total, all occupations</b>	100.0%	100.0%	\$21.74	\$18.89 *	-13
Management	4.8	3.9 *	51.64	47.33 *	-8
Business and financial operations	4.8	2.1 *	33.05	29.15 *	-12
Computer and mathematical	2.7	0.7 *	37.85	29.13 *	-23
Architecture and engineering	1.8	0.4 *	37.08	**[2]	
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.7	32.44	30.67	-5
Community and social service	1.5	1.9	21.07	21.27	1
Legal	0.8	0.2 *	47.30	**[2]	
Education, training, and library	6.6	11.8 *	24.46	27.44 *	12
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.3	0.7 *	25.89	19.52 *	-25
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.9	3.3 *	34.97	36.05	3
Healthcare support	3.1	2.9	13.16	13.37	2
Protective service	2.5	2.9	20.54	23.90 *	16
Food preparation and serving related	8.7	8.7	10.30	10.29	0
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.3	3.2	12.29	13.40 *	9
Personal care and service	2.8	2.0 *	11.84	11.12 *	-6
Sales and related	10.6	8.7 *	18.04	13.77 *	-24
Office and administrative support	16.7	15.3	16.40	15.51 *	-5
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	6.3 *	11.68	9.61 *	-18
Construction and extraction	3.9	2.4 *	21.46	20.19 *	-6
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	4.2	20.86	19.79	-5
Production	6.5	9.4	16.45	15.19	-8
Transportation and material moving	6.7	8.5 *	15.96	15.19	-5

\* 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.

<sup>1</sup> A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in Merced is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

\*\*[2] Estimate not released

One occupational group—transportation and material moving—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Merced had 4,890 jobs in transportation and material moving, accounting for 8.5 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 6.7-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$15.19, compared to the national wage of \$15.96.

With employment of 1,130, laborers and freight, stock, and material movers by hand was the largest occupation within the transportation and material moving group, followed by heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers (1,110) and industrial truck and tractor operators (610). Among the higher paying jobs were first-line supervisors of transportation and material-moving machine and vehicle operators, and excavating and loading machine and dragline operators, with mean hourly wages of \$24.78 and \$19.71, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were packers and packagers by hand (\$9.00) and cleaners of vehicles and equipment (\$9.39). (Detailed occupational data for transportation and material moving are presented in table 1; for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_32900.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_32900.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 than it does nationally. In the Merced Metropolitan Statistical Area, above average concentrations of employment were found in many of the occupations within the transportation and material moving group. For instance, industrial truck and tractor operators were employed at 2.7 times the national rate in Merced, and heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers, at 1.6 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, light truck or delivery services drivers had a location quotient of 1.2 in Merced, 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, the California Employment Development Department. 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 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 Merced 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 also are 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 Merced Metropolitan Statistical Area included 846 establishments with a response rate of 81 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to [www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm).

The May 2011 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 collected on two structures were combined, see the OES Frequently Asked Questions online at [www.bls.gov/oes/oes\\_ques.htm#Ques41](http://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 **Merced, Calif. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Merced County.

### Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at [www.bls.gov/ro9/home.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ro9/home.htm). If you have additional questions, contact the San Francisco Economic Analysis and Information Unit at (415) 625-2270. 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, Merced Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2011**

Occupation <sup>[1]</sup>	Employment		Mean Wages	
	Level <sup>[2]</sup>	Location quotient <sup>[3]</sup>	Hourly	Annual <sup>[4]</sup>
Transportation and material moving occupations	4,890	1.3	\$15.19	\$31,590
First-line supervisors of helpers, laborers, and material movers, hand	70	0.9	19.49	40,530
First-line supervisors of transportation and material-moving machine and vehicle operators	90	1.1	24.78	51,540
Bus drivers, school or special client	*[5]	*[5]	18.93	39,380
Driver/sales workers	360	2.1	*[5]	*[5]
Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers	1,110	1.6	16.03	33,340
Light truck or delivery services drivers	400	1.2	15.31	31,850
Automotive and watercraft service attendants	50	1.1	10.17	21,150
Excavating and loading machine and dragline operators	30	1.6	19.71	41,000
Industrial truck and tractor operators	610	2.7	16.72	34,780
Cleaners of vehicles and equipment	120	0.9	9.39	19,530
Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	1,130	1.2	13.24	27,540
Machine feeders and offbearers	*[5]	*[5]	12.24	25,460
Packers and packagers, hand	460	1.5	9.00	18,710

[1] For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in Merced, see [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_32900.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_32900.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] Estimate not released.