

News

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COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN MARYLAND: SECOND QUARTER 2008

Wages Grew Faster than the Nation in Five of the Eight Largest Counties

In the second quarter of 2008, Montgomery County had an average weekly wage of \$1,110, the highest among Maryland's eight counties with 75,000 or more jobs as measured by 2007 annual average employment, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. Baltimore City was a close second with an average weekly wage of \$1,004, followed by Howard County (\$973) and Prince George's County (\$926). The average weekly wage in Prince George's County increased by 3.9 percent over the year, the largest advance among Maryland's large counties. Anne Arundel County and Baltimore City (each at 3.0 percent) recorded the second fastest wage growth in the State, followed closely by Baltimore and Frederick Counties (each at 2.9 percent). Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that among Maryland's eight large counties, five recorded wage growth above the national rate of 2.6 percent and six had wages above the national average of \$841. (See table 1.)

From a national perspective, Maryland's counties had some of the highest average weekly wages in the country. Montgomery County ranked 16th; Baltimore City, 38th; Howard County, 45th; and Prince George's County, 59th when wages were compared for all 334 large counties nationwide, placing them in the top 20 percent in the United States. While large counties in Maryland were well represented among the top-paying nationally, only Prince George's County (58th) ranked in the top 20 percent for wage growth when compared to other large counties in the nation in the second quarter of 2008.

Among Maryland's large counties, Montgomery County registered the highest level of employment in June 2008 at 462,841. Baltimore County (379,677) and Baltimore City (341,381) followed. From June 2007 to June 2008, Prince George's County recorded the fastest employment growth in the state, at 0.3 percent.

Employment and average wages (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 16 counties in Maryland with employment below 75,000. All but two (St. Mary's and Cecil) of these smaller counties had average weekly wages below the national average. (See table 2.)

Large County Average Weekly Wages

Among Maryland's eight large counties, four—Montgomery, Baltimore City, Howard, and Prince George's—had average weekly wages exceeding \$900 in the second quarter of 2008. Anne Arundel County (\$891) had the fifth-highest wage followed by Baltimore County (\$859). These six large counties, four of which are located in the Baltimore-Towson, Md., metropolitan area and two of which are located in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.-Va.-Md.-W.Va., metropolitan area, were the only large counties in Maryland to record wages greater than the nationwide average of \$841. Wages in these counties ranged from 2 percent higher than the U.S. average in Baltimore County to 32 percent higher in Montgomery County.

At the other end of the wage spectrum, Harford and Frederick Counties reported the lowest average weekly wages among Maryland's eight largest counties at \$762 and \$806, respectively. These two counties had wages \$79 and \$35 below the national average. While both counties registered below-average wages, Frederick County's wages ranked in the top half of the nation at 139th.

Average weekly wages were higher than the national average in 109 of the largest 334 U.S. counties. New York, N.Y., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$1,569. Santa Clara, Calif., was second with an average weekly wage of \$1,529, followed by Washington, D.C. (\$1,433), Arlington, Va. (\$1,376), and San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,334).

Three of the 10 counties with the highest wages in the United States were located in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area (Washington, D.C., Arlington, Va., and Fairfax, Va.), and three others in the New York metropolitan area (New York, N.Y.; Fairfield, Conn.; and Somerset, N.J.). Another three top-paying counties were located in or around the San Francisco metropolitan area (Santa Clara, Calif.; San Francisco, Calif.; and San Mateo, Calif.). Rounding out the top 10 was Suffolk, Mass., which was located in the Boston metropolitan area.

There were 224 counties with an average weekly wage below the national average in the second quarter of 2008. The lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron County, Texas (\$535), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$538), Horry, S.C. (\$539), Webb, Texas (\$562), and Yakima, Wash. (\$580).

Large County Wage Changes

Five of Maryland's eight large counties recorded wage growth above the national increase of 2.6 percent from the second quarter of 2007 to the second quarter of 2008. As mentioned, Prince George's County's 3.9-percent wage gain was the largest increase in the State and 58th highest in the nation, followed by Anne Arundel County and Baltimore City at 3.0 percent each (126th). Baltimore and Frederick Counties (2.9 percent each), also had growth rates above the national average.

While none of the large counties in Maryland experienced wage decreases, wages were unchanged in Harford County from the second quarter of 2007 to the second quarter of 2008. Montgomery and Howard Counties posted gains of 1.6 and 1.9 percent, respectively. All three of these counties had wage growth rates that ranked in the bottom half of large counties nationwide.

Among the largest counties, Rock Island, Ill., led the nation in average weekly wage growth, with an increase of 10.5 percent from the second quarter of 2007. Weld, Colo., was second at 10.4 percent, followed by the counties of Utah, Utah (9.4 percent), Whatcom, Wash. (8.3 percent), and East Baton Rouge, La. (7.8 percent).

Twenty-six large counties experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. Clayton, Ga., had the largest decrease (-43.7 percent), followed by the counties of Boone, Ky. (-10.0 percent), Ventura, Calif., and Trumbull, Ohio (-4.8 percent each), and Queens, N.Y. (-4.3 percent).

Average Wages in Maryland's Smaller Counties

As mentioned, all but 2 of the 16 counties in Maryland with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages below the national average. Worcester County reported the lowest wage at \$494. The highest wage among Maryland's 16 small counties was St. Mary's County's \$1,017, followed by Cecil County's \$846.

When all 24 counties in Maryland were considered, only Worcester County had wages below \$500. Nine of the counties in Maryland reported average weekly wages from \$501 to \$700 in the second quarter of 2008, while another nine recorded wages from \$701 to \$900. Among the higher-paid counties, Montgomery was the only county with wages above \$1,101, while four others had wages ranging from \$901 to 1,100. Nearly all of the better-paid counties were located in the Baltimore and Washington metropolitan areas. The lowest-paid county, Worcester, was on the Delmarva Peninsula. (See chart 1.)

State Average Weekly Wages

The average weekly wage in Maryland was \$920, \$79 above the national average, ranking it 7th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Nationally, 15 states had average weekly wages surpassing the U.S. average; 8 of these, including Maryland, fell in a contiguous band along the east coast stretching from Massachusetts to Virginia. The five highest average wages in the nation were in the District of Columbia (\$1,433), Massachusetts (\$1,044), New York (\$1,040), Connecticut (\$1,036), and New Jersey (\$1,004). Average weekly wages in this group were 19 percent or more above that for the nation. During this same period, two states had wages averaging less than 75 percent of national earnings: South Dakota (\$606) and Montana (\$629). (See table 2 and chart 1.)

The District of Columbia recorded the fastest wage growth (5.9 percent) among the states in the second quarter of 2008. Five other states experienced wage growth above 5.0 percent from the second quarter of 2007—North Dakota (5.8 percent), Louisiana (5.5 percent), Wyoming (5.4 percent), Oklahoma (5.3 percent), and West Virginia (5.1 percent). At the other end of the scale, two states experienced over-the-year declines in wages—Delaware (-0.8 percent) and Georgia (-0.6 percent).

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 136.6 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; this 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 (see Technical Note below) and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

Additional statistics and other information

An annual bulletin, *Employment and Wages*, features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2007 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 2008 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from the 2007 Employment and Wages Annual Bulletin are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn07.htm. These tables present final 2007 annual averages. The tables will also be included on the CD which accompanies the hardcopy version of the Annual Bulletin. Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2007 will be available for sale as a chartbook by the end of the first quarter in 2009 from the United States Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250, telephone 866-512-1800, outside Washington, D.C. Within Washington, D.C., the telephone number is 202-512-1800. The fax number is 202-512-2104.

Also, the quarterly press release, County Employment and Wages, presents employment and wage data for the largest counties in the U.S. and is available at www.bls.gov/cew/.

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 data, as well as other Bureau data, 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.

QCEW-based news releases issued by other regional offices have been placed at one convenient Web site location, www.bls.gov/cew/cewregional.htm.

Technical Note

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 8 largest counties in Maryland, second quarter 2008²

Area	Employment		Average Weekly Wage ³			
	June 2008 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2007-08 ⁴	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁵	Percent change, second quarter 2007-08 ⁴	National ranking by percent change ⁵
United States ⁶	136,631.8	-0.3	\$841	--	2.6	--
Maryland	2,577.7	-0.3	920	7	2.8	26
Anne Arundel, Md.	237.5	0.0	891	77	3.0	126
Baltimore City, Md.	341.3	-1.0	1,004	38	3.0	126
Baltimore, Md.	379.7	-0.5	859	99	2.9	129
Frederick, Md.	95.7	-0.9	806	139	2.9	129
Harford, Md.	84.9	-2.0	762	189	0.0	300
Howard, Md.	151.3	0.1	973	45	1.9	218
Montgomery, Md.	462.8	-0.8	1,110	16	1.6	242
Prince George's, Md.	317.7	0.3	926	59	3.9	58

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 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 Maryland, second quarter 2008²

Area	Employment June 2008 (thousands)	Average weekly wage ³
United States ⁴	136,631.8	\$841
Maryland	2,577.7	920
Allegany	29.8	618
Anne Arundel	237.5	891
Baltimore County	379.7	859
Calvert	22.6	736
Caroline	9.1	596
Carroll	58.4	667
Cecil	31.7	846
Charles	42.5	717
Dorchester	11.9	629
Frederick	95.7	806
Garrett	12.3	538
Harford	84.9	762
Howard	151.3	973
Kent	8.6	642
Montgomery	462.8	1,110
Prince George's	317.7	926
Queen Anne's	14.5	604
St. Mary's	40.2	1,017
Somerset	7.1	708
Talbot	20.4	648
Washington	66.4	713
Wicomico	47.3	686
Worcester	29.8	494
Baltimore City	341.3	1,004

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, second quarter 2008²

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ³			
	June 2008 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2007-08	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, second quarter 2007-08	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁴	136,631.8	-0.3	\$841	-	2.6	-
Alabama	1,955.4	-0.5	720	33	3.3	15
Alaska	330.6	1.4	860	12	3.1	16
Arizona	2,543.9	-2.6	806	19	2.4	34
Arkansas	1,183.5	-0.2	661	46	3.4	11
California	15,760.3	-0.5	955	6	2.2	42
Colorado	2,346.3	0.8	858	13	3.1	16
Connecticut	1,722.3	0.5	1,036	4	0.3	49
Delaware	427.3	-0.9	862	10	-0.8	51
District of Columbia	691.4	1.2	1,433	1	5.9	1
Florida	7,620.1	-3.4	762	26	2.6	30
Georgia	4,059.7	-0.6	787	22	-0.6	50
Hawaii	623.9	-1.3	764	24	3.9	9
Idaho	671.9	-0.9	636	48	1.6	46
Illinois	5,930.0	-0.4	893	8	2.3	39
Indiana	2,906.5	-0.9	715	38	1.9	43
Iowa	1,521.2	0.1	683	42	2.9	23
Kansas	1,389.1	1.2	720	33	2.4	34
Kentucky	1,818.9	-0.5	718	35	2.6	30
Louisiana	1,900.3	1.2	750	29	5.5	3
Maine	620.3	0.1	676	44	2.7	28
Maryland	2,577.7	-0.3	920	7	2.8	26
Massachusetts	3,310.4	0.1	1,044	2	3.6	10
Michigan	4,163.3	-2.2	825	18	2.4	34
Minnesota	2,733.9	-0.5	849	14	1.8	45
Mississippi	1,139.1	0.1	635	49	4.4	7
Missouri	2,761.6	0.0	752	28	3.4	11
Montana	450.3	0.1	629	50	2.9	23
Nebraska	936.1	0.5	676	44	3.4	11
Nevada	1,271.8	-1.9	797	20	2.7	28
New Hampshire	641.9	-0.4	835	16	1.5	48
New Jersey	4,054.4	-0.4	1,004	5	1.6	46
New Mexico	837.2	0.6	715	38	4.2	8
New York	8,758.2	0.6	1,040	3	2.3	39
North Carolina	4,083.6	-0.1	735	31	2.4	34
North Dakota	356.4	2.5	654	47	5.8	2
Ohio	5,315.0	-1.3	757	27	2.3	39
Oklahoma	1,556.0	1.0	701	40	5.3	5
Oregon	1,747.4	-0.8	764	24	3.0	20
Pennsylvania	5,743.3	0.1	827	17	3.1	16
Rhode Island	481.6	-2.2	796	21	2.8	26
South Carolina	1,907.5	-0.6	681	43	2.4	34
South Dakota	409.0	1.2	606	51	2.9	23
Tennessee	2,752.7	-0.4	745	30	1.9	43
Texas	10,510.3	2.2	849	14	2.5	33
Utah	1,234.3	0.1	716	37	2.6	30
Vermont	305.6	-0.9	718	35	3.0	20
Virginia	3,720.4	-0.3	885	9	3.0	20
Washington	3,000.9	0.3	862	10	3.4	11
West Virginia	715.3	0.0	695	41	5.1	6
Wisconsin	2,836.8	-0.5	730	32	3.1	16
Wyoming	296.7	2.7	780	23	5.4	4
Puerto Rico	997.8	-2.0	475	[5]	3.5	[5]
Virgin Islands	45.9	-2.2	703	[5]	-0.6	[5]

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

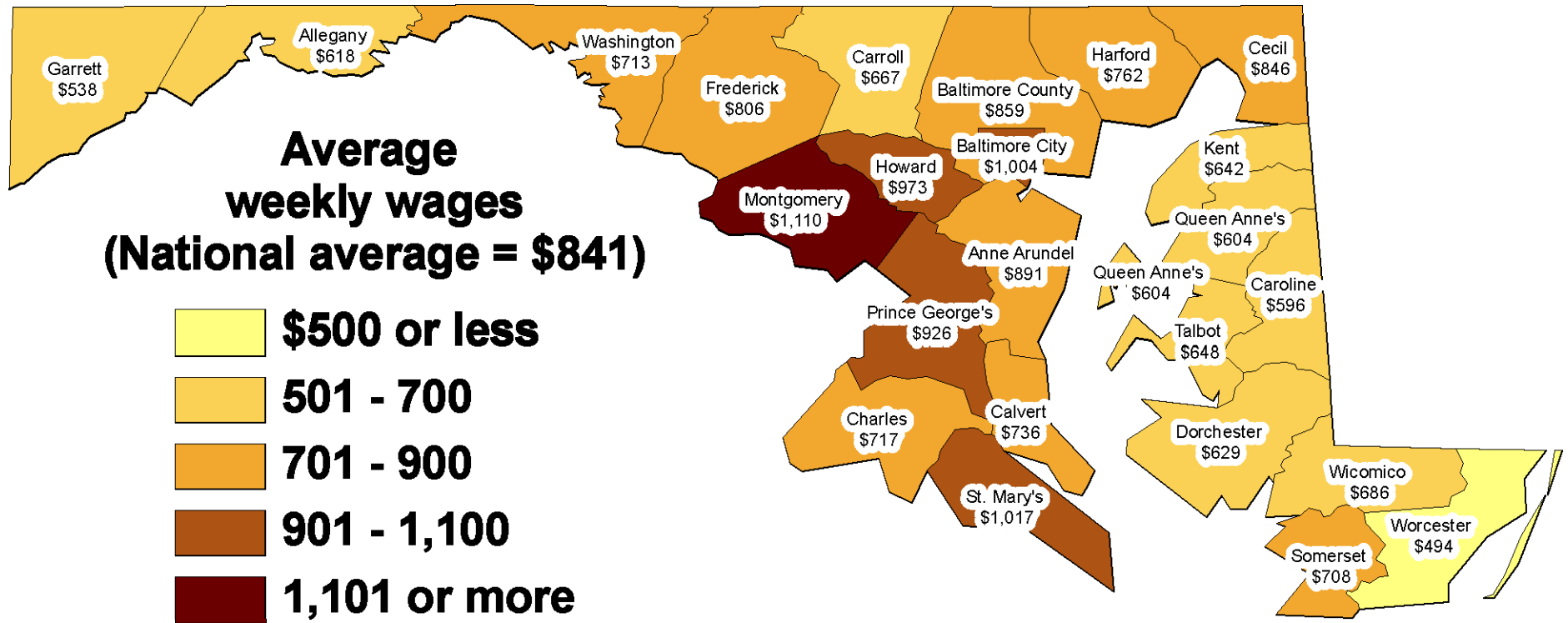
² Data are preliminary.

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 Maryland, second quarter 2008¹



¹ Data are preliminary.