

SOUTHWEST INFORMATION OFFICE
Dallas, Texas

For release: Wednesday, May 23, 2012

12-1043-DAL

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OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN FORT SMITH, MAY 2011

Workers in the Fort Smith Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$16.59 in May 2011, about 24 percent below the nationwide average of \$21.74, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that, after testing for statistical significance, no wages in the local area were significantly higher than their respective national averages in 22 major occupational groups. Twenty-one groups had significantly lower wages than their respective national averages, including legal, computer and mathematical, and management.

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

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Fort Smith	United States	Fort Smith	Percent difference ¹
Total, all occupations	100.0%	100.0%	\$21.74	\$16.59 *	-24
Management	4.8	4.0 *	51.64	39.12 *	-24
Business and financial operations	4.8	2.5 *	33.05	26.67 *	-19
Computer and mathematical	2.7	1.0 *	37.85	26.93 *	-29
Architecture and engineering	1.8	0.8 *	37.08	31.10 *	-16
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.2 *	32.44	23.92 *	-26
Community and social service	1.5	1.3 *	21.07	17.34 *	-18
Legal	0.8	0.5 *	47.30	28.47 *	-40
Education, training, and library	6.6	5.9 *	24.46	18.61 *	-24
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.3	0.6 *	25.89	16.53 *	-36
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.9	5.7	34.97	28.98 *	-17
Healthcare support	3.1	3.2	13.16	10.67 *	-19
Protective service	2.5	1.6 *	20.54	15.16 *	-26
Food preparation and serving related	8.7	7.8 *	10.30	8.85 *	-14
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.3	2.4 *	12.29	10.90 *	-11
Personal care and service	2.8	2.6 *	11.84	9.15 *	-23
Sales and related	10.6	9.6 *	18.04	13.64 *	-24
Office and administrative support	16.7	15.2 *	16.40	13.11 *	-20
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.3	11.68	10.68 *	-9
Construction and extraction	3.9	4.7 *	21.46	16.79 *	-22
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	4.5 *	20.86	17.60 *	-16
Production	6.5	14.1 *	16.45	14.07 *	-14
Transportation and material moving	6.7	11.6 *	15.96	16.48	3

* 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.

¹ A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in Fort Smith is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 4 of the 22 occupational groups, including production, transportation and material moving, and construction and extraction. Conversely, 15 groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including business and financial operations, computer and mathematical, and office and administrative support. (See table A and box note at end of release.)

One occupational group—production—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Fort Smith had 15,970 jobs in production, accounting for 14.1 percent of local area employment, more than double the 6.5-percent national share. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$14.07, measurably below the national wage of \$16.45.

With employment of 2,630, team assemblers was the largest occupation within the production group, followed by production workers' helpers (2,080) and meat, poultry, and fish cutters and trimmers (1,620). Among the higher paying jobs were first-line supervisors of production and operating workers and tool and die makers, with mean hourly wages of \$23.98 and \$18.51, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were meat, poultry, and fish cutters and trimmers (\$9.64) and production workers' helpers (\$10.86). (Detailed occupational data for the production occupational group are presented in table 1; for a complete listing of detailed occupations go to www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_22900.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 Fort Smith Metropolitan Statistical Area, above average concentrations of employment were found in many of the occupations within the production group. For instance, meat, poultry, and fish cutters and trimmers were employed at 11.2 times the national rate in Fort Smith, and food cooking machine operators and tenders, at 8.2 times the U.S. average.

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 Arkansas Department of Workforce Services. 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 Fort Smith 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 Fort Smith Metropolitan Statistical Area included 1,814 establishments with a response rate of 87 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to 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.

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 **Fort Smith Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Crawford, Franklin, and Sebastian Counties in Arkansas, and Le Flore and Sequoyah Counties in Oklahoma.

Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at www.bls.gov/ro6. If you have additional questions, contact the Southwest Information Office at (972) 850-4800. 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, Fort Smith Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2011

Occupation ¹	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ²	Location quotient ³	Hourly	Annual ⁴
Production occupations	15,970	2.2	\$14.07	\$29,260
First-line supervisors of production and operating workers	850	1.7	23.98	49,880
Electrical and electronic equipment assemblers	[5]	[5]	18.29	38,050
Structural metal fabricators and fitters	50	0.8	14.97	31,130
Fiberglass laminators and fabricators	30	1.8	13.46	28,000
Team assemblers	2,630	3.1	14.41	29,970
Assemblers and fabricators, all other	240	1.0	10.68	22,210
Bakers	140	1.1	9.75	20,280
Butchers and meat cutters	90	0.8	13.19	27,430
Meat, poultry, and fish cutters and trimmers	1,620	11.2	9.64	20,050
Food and tobacco roasting, baking, and drying machine operators and tenders	50	3.3	14.03	29,190
Food batchmakers	70	0.8	11.26	23,420
Food cooking machine operators and tenders	220	8.2	12.65	26,320
Extruding and drawing machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	170	2.5	14.83	30,850
Cutting, punching, and press machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	280	1.8	17.27	35,930
Milling and planing machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	50	2.8	18.93	39,380
Machinists	520	1.6	15.68	32,610
Molding, coremaking, and casting machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	190	1.8	15.56	32,370
Multiple machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	250	3.7	16.59	34,500
Tool and die makers	170	2.8	18.51	38,510
Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers	700	2.5	16.88	35,100
Welding, soldering, and brazing machine setters, operators, and tenders	[5]	[5]	15.84	32,940
Plating and coating machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	80	2.9	15.42	32,070
Prepress technicians and workers	100	2.7	17.43	36,260
Printing press operators	190	1.2	14.85	30,880
Laundry and dry-cleaning workers	150	0.9	9.15	19,040
Pressers, textile, garment, and related materials	60	1.2	8.91	18,540
Sewing machine operators	120	1.0	9.69	20,160
Upholsterers	60	2.5	14.20	29,540
Cabinetmakers and bench carpenters	[5]	[5]	13.60	28,290
Water and wastewater treatment plant and system operators	250	2.6	14.12	29,370
Separating, filtering, clarifying, precipitating, and still machine setters, operators, and tenders	100	2.8	11.47	23,870
Crushing, grinding, and polishing machine setters, operators, and tenders	50	1.8	9.29	19,330
Mixing and blending machine setters, operators, and tenders	70	0.7	16.04	33,350
Cutting and slicing machine setters, operators, and tenders	310	5.9	10.89	22,650
Extruding, forming, pressing, and compacting machine setters, operators, and tenders	60	1.0	15.24	31,700
Inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers	640	1.7	15.50	32,240
Packaging and filling machine operators and tenders	620	2.0	14.30	29,750
Coating, painting, and spraying machine setters, operators, and tenders	130	1.9	18.44	38,360
Photographic process workers and processing machine operators	50	1.2	10.29	21,400
Adhesive bonding machine operators and tenders	[5]	[5]	15.88	33,020
Cleaning, washing, and metal pickling equipment operators and tenders	60	4.0	10.78	22,420
Paper goods machine setters, operators, and tenders	360	4.4	15.53	32,300
Production workers' helpers	2,080	5.6	10.86	22,590
Production workers, all other*	370	1.8	10.22	21,250

¹ For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in the Fort Smith MSA, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_22900.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 Estimates not available.

* Occupation titles followed by an asterisk (*) have similar titles, but not necessarily the same content as 2010 SOC occupations.