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## **OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN HUNTSVILLE, MAY 2011**

Workers in the Huntsville Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$23.59 in May 2011, about 9 percent above the nationwide average of \$21.74, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were significantly higher than their respective national averages in 4 of the 22 major occupational groups, including architecture and engineering, and business and financial operations. Thirteen groups had significantly lower wages than their respective national averages, including construction and extraction, transportation and material moving, and sales and related.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 4 of the 22 occupational groups, including architecture and engineering, and computer and mathematical. Conversely, 14 groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including office and administrative support, food preparation and serving related, and healthcare practitioners and technical. (See table A and box note at end of release.)

One occupational group—architecture and engineering—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Huntsville had 16,410 jobs in architecture and engineering, accounting for 8.1 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 1.8-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$44.39, measurably above the national wage of \$37.08.

With employment of 2,780, aerospace engineers was one of the largest occupations within the architecture and engineering group, as were electrical engineers (1,770) and mechanical engineers (1,220). Among the higher paying jobs were aerospace engineers and computer hardware engineers, with mean hourly wages of \$56.46 and \$48.12, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were cartographers and photogrammetrists (\$20.78) and electrical and electronics engineering technicians (\$25.72). (Detailed occupational data for architecture and engineering are presented in table 1; for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_26620.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_26620.htm).)

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

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Huntsville	United States	Huntsville	Percent difference (1)
<b>Total, all occupations</b>	100.0%	100.0%	\$21.74	\$23.59 *	9
Management	4.8	4.4 *	51.64	54.44 *	5
Business and financial operations	4.8	7.4 *	33.05	37.44 *	13
Computer and mathematical	2.7	6.9 *	37.85	38.67	2
Architecture and engineering	1.8	8.1 *	37.08	44.39 *	20
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.6 *	32.44	37.03 *	14
Community and social service	1.5	0.6 *	21.07	19.78 *	-6
Legal	0.8	0.4 *	47.30	46.88	-1
Education, training, and library	6.6	4.7 *	24.46	21.34 *	-13
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.3	1.3	25.89	20.34 *	-21
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.9	5.0 *	34.97	33.34	-5
Healthcare support	3.1	2.2 *	13.16	11.69 *	-11
Protective service	2.5	1.8 *	20.54	17.71 *	-14
Food preparation and serving related	8.7	7.6 *	10.30	9.78 *	-5
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.3	2.9	12.29	10.84 *	-12
Personal care and service	2.8	1.8 *	11.84	10.53 *	-11
Sales and related	10.6	10.4	18.04	14.76 *	-18
Office and administrative support	16.7	14.6 *	16.40	15.39 *	-6
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	(2)	11.68	12.19	4
Construction and extraction	3.9	3.0 *	21.46	16.89 *	-21
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	3.3 *	20.86	20.35	-2
Production	6.5	7.4 *	16.45	15.74 *	-4
Transportation and material moving	6.7	5.5 *	15.96	12.93 *	-19

\* 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 Huntsville is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

(2) Estimate not released

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 Huntsville Metropolitan Statistical Area, above average concentrations of employment were found in many of the occupations within the architecture and engineering group. For instance, aerospace engineers were employed at 22.3 times the national rate in Huntsville, and computer hardware engineers, at 9.6 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, civil engineers had a location quotient of 1.1 in Huntsville, 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 Alabama Department of Industrial Relations. 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 Huntsville 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 Huntsville Metropolitan Statistical Area included 1,925 establishments with a response rate of 82 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 **Huntsville, Ala. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Limestone and Madison Counties.

### **Additional information**

OES data are available on our regional web page at [www.bls.gov/ro4/home.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ro4/home.htm). If you have additional questions, contact the Southeast Economic Analysis and Information Unit at (404) 893-4222. 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, Huntsville 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>
Architecture and engineering occupations	16,410	4.5	\$44.39	\$92,330
Architects, except landscape and naval	110	0.9	34.08	70,890
Cartographers and photogrammetrists	360	20.6	20.78	43,220
Surveyors	60	0.9	25.80	53,650
Aerospace engineers	2,780	22.3	56.46	117,430
Chemical engineers	80	1.7	45.37	94,370
Civil engineers	450	1.1	39.65	82,470
Computer hardware engineers	1,080	9.6	48.12	100,100
Electrical engineers	1,770	7.3	49.02	101,970
Electronics engineers, except computer	1,010	4.7	48.68	101,250
Environmental engineers	250	3.2	38.16	79,360
Health and safety engineers, except mining safety engineers and inspectors	90	2.4	48.46	100,800
Industrial engineers	740	2.2	42.44	88,270
Materials engineers	240	7.0	47.09	97,950
Mechanical engineers	1,220	3.3	43.60	90,680
Engineers, all other	3,040	15.4	53.15	110,560
Architectural and civil drafters	40	0.3	17.12	35,610
Electrical and electronics drafters	150	3.3	26.09	54,260
Mechanical drafters	170	1.7	28.06	58,360
Drafters, all other	30	1.3	25.33	52,700
Aerospace engineering and operations technicians	150	10.2	28.15	58,560
Civil engineering technicians	100	0.9	18.10	37,650
Electrical and electronics engineering technicians	1,180	5.0	25.72	53,500
Environmental engineering technicians	200	6.7	18.50	38,490
Industrial engineering technicians	240	2.4	26.82	55,790
Mechanical engineering technicians	280	4.0	22.88	47,600
Engineering technicians, except drafters, all other	460	4.5	26.12	54,330
Surveying and mapping technicians	60	0.8	15.68	32,610

(1) For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in Huntsville, see [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_26620.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_26620.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.